

HIT LIST

volume two/number six

may/june 2001

\$3.95

**PROPAGANDHI
THE QUEERS**

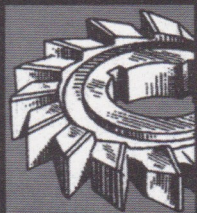


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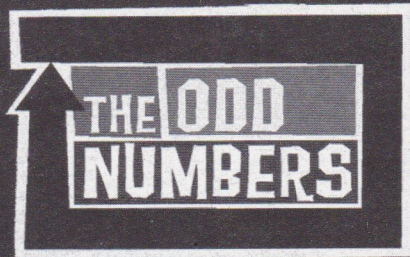
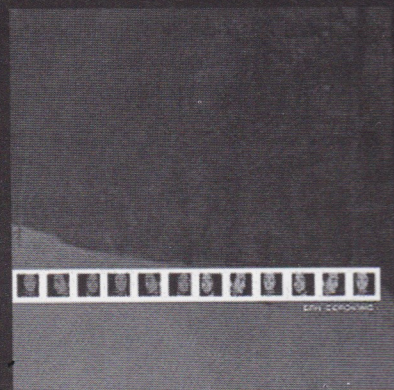
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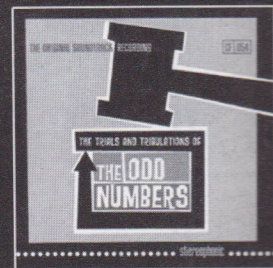
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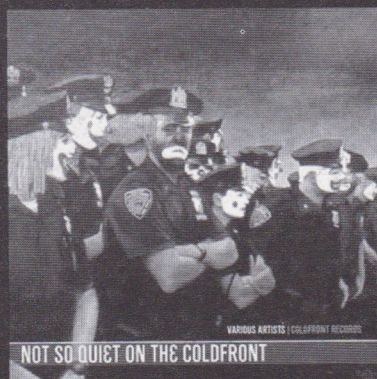
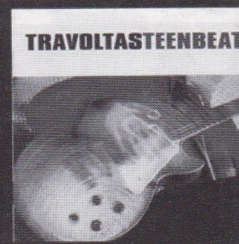
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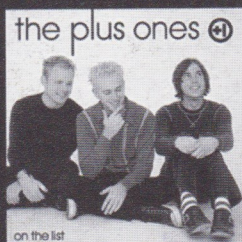
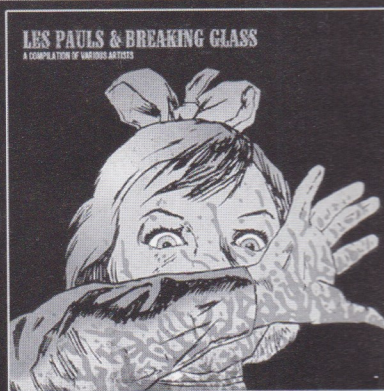


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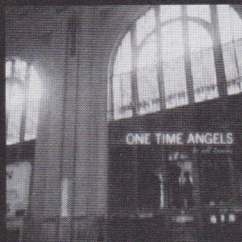
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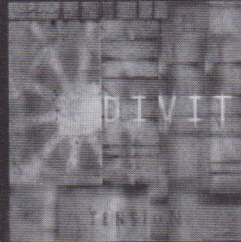
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Propgandhi 34 • Vic Bondi 41 • The Pattern 48 • Hangmen 52
Cult Wars 60 • Al Quint 68 • Culture Wars 74 • The Briefs 78
Jesse Luscious 84 • Phoebe Legere 88 • Leslie Goldman 98
Death of Kurt Cobain 100 • Jeff Jarema 106 • The Queens 108 •
Larry Livermore 118 • Rev. Nørb 121 • Tsar 126 • Jack Rabid 130
Dimitri Monroe 138 • Reviews 145



volume two number six • may/june 2001

HIT LIST

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& deadlines

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1/4 page-(3.75" X 5")-\$70

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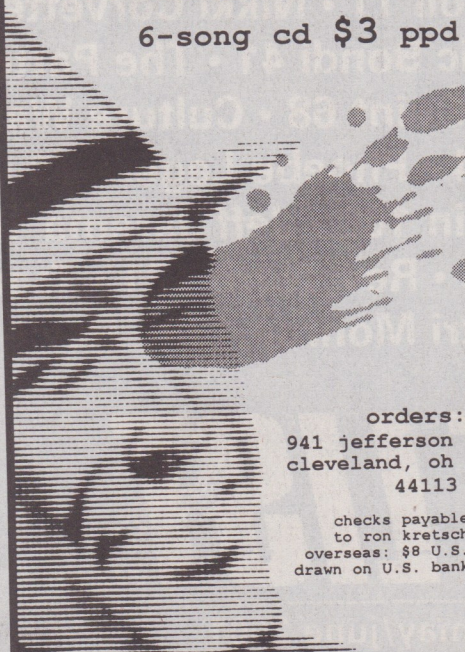
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"This is a fucking disaster!"

Jeffrey "Marsupial" Bale

Executive Coordinator

Brett Mathews

Design Minions

Justin Wright & Matt Stutz

Production/Destruction/

Ivy Mike Switch-Flipper

Davey G. Johnson

Contributors

Thee Whiskey Rebel, Johan Kugelberg,
Mike Stax, Rev. "Finally! The Italics
Have Come Back To My Column! Then
They Left! Now They're Back! And
Bolds, Too!" Nørb, Mel "The Next
Tobin Sprout?" Cheplowitz, Larry "Jose
Palafox Was Framed, Dammit!"
Livermore, Frank Discussion, Leslie
Goldman, Richard Tater, Texas Tim
Stegall, Jack "Kid-Eh" Rabid, Al
"Hanneman" Quint, Jimi "I'm Gonna
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Cheetah, Sara Bellum, Athena Dread,
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City Vic Bondi, Gregg "El Chupacabra"
Turner, Kevin Coogan, Jeremy Bellah-
Of St. Mary's, Ramsey "I am Lebanese if
You Please" Kanaan, Mitch "I'll Be To
Your House in 5 Minutes to Pick Up My
Records" Cardwell, Jami Wolf, Jeff
Alexander, Jesse Luscious, Tina
Lucchesi, Alan Wright, Chad Hensley,
Evan Jacobs, LMNOP, Glenn Shires,
Josh Rutledge, Adam X, Mark DeVito.
The Sleazegrinder, Rev. Randall Tin-Ear,
Phil Overeem

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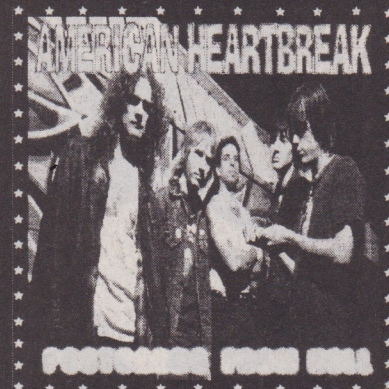
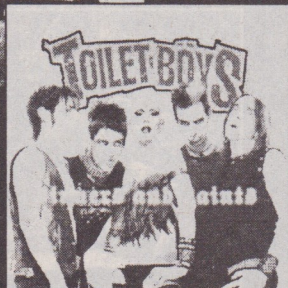
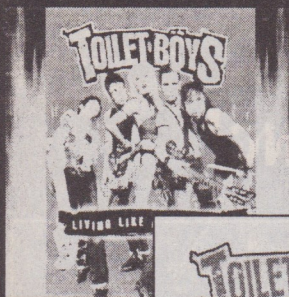
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Hit List is distributed
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Hit List logo by The Fearsome John Yates
at Stealworks

"AUTOBAHN TO HELL"



TOILET BOYS

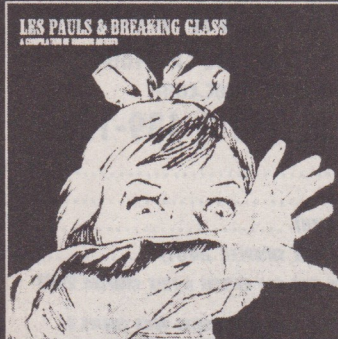
"Living Like A Millionaire" pic 12"
"Sinners & Saints" CD-EP / pic 12"

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split 7" (limited to 1,000 copies)
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AMERICAN HEARTBREAK

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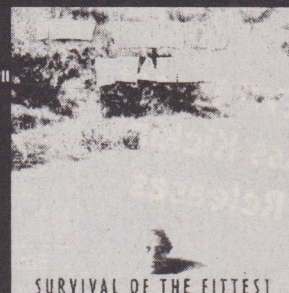
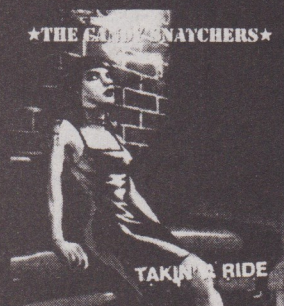
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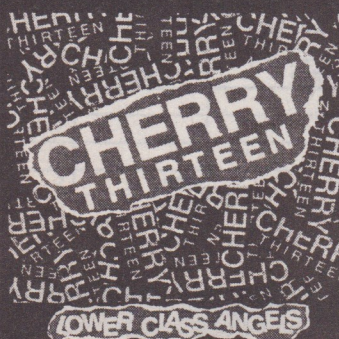


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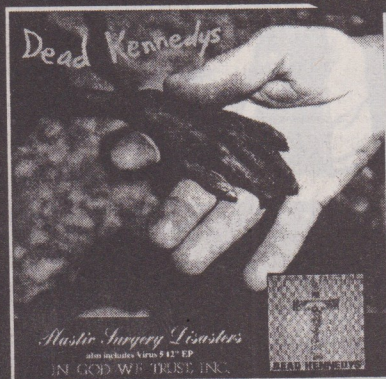
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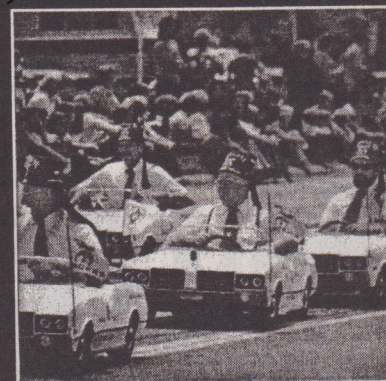
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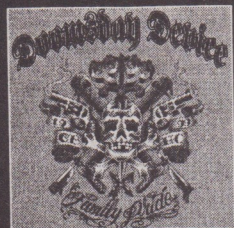
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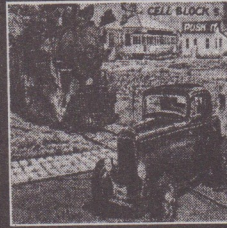
INDS Record Sampler



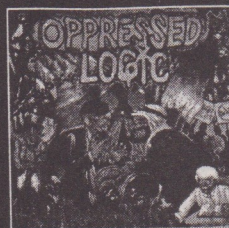
Doomsday Device



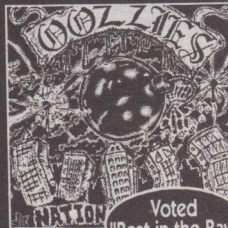
Strychnine



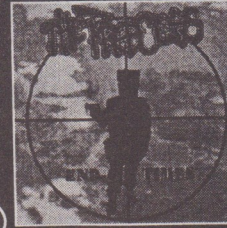
Cell Block 5



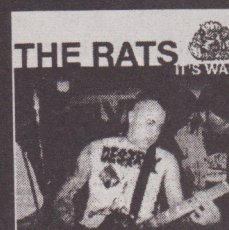
Oppressed Logic



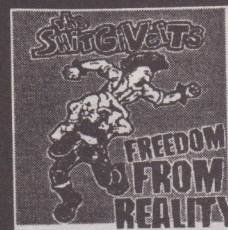
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ON THE ECONOMICS OF PUTTING OUT AN UNDERGROUND ROCK'N'ROLL ZINE

It should be apparent to everyone familiar with our magazine that we've changed the format of *Hit List* this issue, and in this portion of my column I'm going to explain just why we did it. First of all, though, I should point out that two years ago, when Mel, Brett, and I initially sat down to discuss putting out a new punk magazine, I knew absolutely nothing about the economics of zine publication. That may sound strange, since for years I had been serving as a writer/editor for various other underground magazines, including *Damage* and *MRR*, but the simple truth is that I never paid any attention whatsoever to the practical, economic aspects of publishing a magazine. I've always been a stereotypical "absent-minded professor" type, i.e., a dreamer, a thinker, a researcher, a writer, an analyst, and an editor, as well as a passionate rock 'n' roll fan, not someone who has ever been concerned with mundane but crucially important business matters. Indeed, it was for this very reason that I initially hooked up with Brett Matthews, who is much more practical and has much more business sense than I do, not to mention a real knack for interacting with advertisers, printers, and other "real-world" persons. I simply do not have the temperament, interest, or social skills to handle those sorts of schmoozing tasks, so I've come to rely upon Brett to deal with these sordid economic realities as much as he relies upon me to recruit contributors, solicit articles, and edit the magazine.

In short, before we actually began publishing *Hit List*, I had no idea that the most crucial factor in successfully financing a magazine lay in raising sufficient ad revenue to cover all or most of the production costs. Sales are almost irrelevant, as it turns out. The reason is simple. If you provide exceptional value by putting out a really hefty, high-quality magazine and selling it for a relatively low price, as we do, it costs as much or more to produce each magazine as you can earn from selling it. In our case, for example, it cost almost \$2 apiece to manufacture each copy of *Hit List* with perfect (i.e., book-style) binding and heavy 50-weight bookstock paper. At the same time, after shipping, reship, and promo mailing charges were deducted, we only ended up making somewhere between \$1.10 and \$1.50 per copy sold. Hence, even if we had been selling 100,000 magazines each issue, which would have led to some reduction in production costs per issue, we would still have been barely able to break even based solely on the profits from sales. In short, advertising revenue is all-important, and the goal is to be able to raise enough of it to cover the entire production cost of each issue.

Somehow, even though 1) paper costs have increased dramatically since we began publishing, and 2) we ended up using one of the best and more expensive printers in the Bay Area, we've basically managed to cover our extraordinarily high production costs with ad revenue...barely. (At times we made a tad more than we needed, at times just the right amount, and at times a little less, but it all more or less evened out.) However, the ongoing need to raise nearly \$12,000 per issue for printing the insides, printing the covers, paying our graphics people, and mailing out promos has placed immense burdens on us, both material and psychological, since there's never any guarantee that sufficient funds can be raised in time for our scheduled release date every two months. (Indeed, on a couple of occasions, we actually had to delay publication for a few weeks until more promised ads came in.) On top of this fundamental economic reality, which is directly attributable to our high production costs and which we would

therefore continually face even in the best of circumstances, the sad truth is that most independent underground labels are nowadays struggling to make ends meet. As I pointed out in my column a couple of issues back, an ever-increasing flood of product is now inundating a relatively small punk and garage "niche market" that's already oversaturated. The situation is so bad that several of the labels that previously advertised in our magazine (as well as in the other leading underground zines) have since gone out of business, and many of those that remain afloat and desperately wish to advertise on a regular basis do not always have enough disposable income to do so. (Once upon a time, it was fairly easy to sell at least 2000-3000 copies of a really good underground punk record, but today it's increasingly difficult to

JEFF BALE
READ BETWEEN THE LINES



sell even 1000. Worst of all, the labels that put out the best new punk and garage records tend to be the ones that are struggling the most, whereas purveyors of the most generic schlock seem to be rolling in dough.) If all this wasn't problematic enough, our own distributor is placing unconscionable burdens on us by regularly forcing us to turn down ads from all the small-scale rock-'n'-roll labels that now have affiliations with major labels, no matter how tenuous those affiliations may be.

This latter problem should be further highlighted. Apart from the fact that distributors have no right to tell magazine editors what they can and cannot put inside their own magazines, much less force them to refuse several thousand dollars of ad revenue per issue, the fact is that Mordam's policy is not only ridiculous but thoroughly hypocritical. Apparently, it's perfectly acceptable for Mordam itself to make lots of money by selling records and magazines to big corporate music chains like Tower, but for some perverse reason it's *not* OK for those of us who put out the products that Mordam distributes to help finance those products with revenue derived from other corporate music sources. It would be reprehensible and counterproductive enough if Mordam only prevented us from taking ads from the big major labels, since such a supposedly "righteous" policy very effectively punishes underground magazines but has no effect at all on the profits earned by the majors. But Mordam isn't content to stop there. They even go so far as to forbid us to take ads from former underground labels that are now only tangentially affiliated with majors. One such label is Sub Pop, which is once again independent for all practical purposes. Just how absurd is all this? As fans it's fine and dandy for us to feature the BLACK HALOS on the cover of our magazine and rave about them until the cows come home, yet we aren't even allowed to take any ads from the label that puts out their records!

The editors of *Gearhead* and *Punk Planet* are no less opposed in principle to this oppressive, nonsensical Mordam policy than I am (even if Dan prefers not to accept major label ads), and Mike and I have repeatedly complained about it to Ruth, to no avail. As usual, those who wish to portray themselves as "paragons of morality" have no qualms about doing so *at the expense of others*, but are rarely if ever willing to make any personal sacrifices of their own. (Tim Yohannan was probably the only person I've ever known who willingly and



repeatedly sacrificed his own financial interests in the service of his political ideology - foolish as it often was - and for that I always respected him.) But most "political punks" are the worst sorts of hypocrites, like when they publicly denounce others for eating meat while covering themselves head-to-toe with leather and other animal byproducts. Let's face it: *anyone* can "talk the talk", but when push comes to shove almost no one is willing to "walk the walk". Think of all those hypocritical liberals who, desperate to be perceived as "concerned humanitarians", blithely imposed onerous busing schemes on poor children attending public schools but then sent their own kids to convenient private neighborhood schools. Or the equally hypocritical "patriotic" conservatives who have advocated military adventurism but then secretly arranged it so their own children didn't have to serve in the armed forces.

Be that as it may, Brett and I sat down a couple of weeks ago to discuss the best course of action to adopt. We considered several possible options. First, we could continue along our present course, despite all the potential difficulties and uncertainties which that entailed. Second, we could raise the cover price of our magazine, as *Punk Planet* was recently forced to do to remain economically viable. (It should also be pointed out that most other magazines with similarly high-quality production, such as *Ugly Things* and *Gearhead*, have considerably higher cover prices than *Hit List* or *Punk Planet*, and that they come out much less frequently.) Third, we could cut the exorbitant production costs of *Hit List* so as to ensure a more stable financial foundation, not to mention limit our own aggravation and stress. Fourth, we could expand our advertising base and significantly increase our revenue stream by taking ads from major labels and their "hipper" affiliates. Personally, I was in favor of adopting this last course of action, since I prefer to maintain the previous physical quality of our magazine and believe that it's far more "punk" to take money from major labels and give them nothing in return than it is to adopt some dopey, wholly symbolic P.C. posture that has no effect whatsoever on the corporate music business and only ends up hurting the cash-starved underground scene. If that meant finding another distributor, so be it. My reasoning was that if *The Big Takeover* and *Ugly Things* could get decent distribution without putting up with such unwarranted interference from their distributors, so could we. However, Brett instead argued in favor of cutting our production costs - as long as we were still able to continue publishing a really high-quality magazine. We both agreed that we would never be satisfied putting out some crappy newsprint or xeroxed magazine, no matter how stereotypically "punk" this seemed to be or how much money we could save in the process. We decided to explore several of the above options, and quickly learned that simply by abandoning perfect binding and the heaviest bookstock paper, we could save several thousand dollars per issue without seriously compromising the quality of *Hit List*. And that's exactly what we decided to do, at least for the moment.

As usual, those who wish to portray themselves as "paragons of morality" have no qualms about doing so at the expense of others.

Lest anyone get the wrong impression, I should point out that the circulation of our magazine has recently been going up every issue, so much so that at this rate we'll soon be giving our chief competitors an even bigger headache. It's also the case that, had we been willing to settle for less by putting out some cheap-o zine like *MRR*, which costs less than 50 cents apiece to produce, we would never have had the slightest difficulty raising sufficient ad revenue. On the contrary, we'd be positively rolling in greenbacks at this point. We ran into ongoing logistical problems and periodic financial headaches precisely because we were determined to put out the highest quality underground rock-'n'roll magazine ever, a goal I believe we have achieved. At this point,

however, our obsessive concern for the highest physical standards seems like a vain conceit, or at least an extravagant luxury, since we were doing it essentially to satisfy our own lofty aesthetic tastes, not because our readers were concerned about it one way or the other. Now, in order to tighten up our release schedule and preserve our own piece of mind, we've decided to cut back a bit on costs.

Nevertheless, in the space of a mere two years, I'm proud to say that *Hit List* is already one of the most widely-read underground rock-'n'roll magazines in the world, and once it gets picked up by a host of small record and book stores that don't yet even know we exist, our circulation seems destined to continue growing. I can therefore assure you that, come hell or high water, we plan to continue spreading the *Hit List* "gospel": that listening to real rock-'n'roll remains life-transforming (though perhaps no longer world-transforming), as well as incomparably blissful, even if it's currently out-of-style amongst the braindead masses; that it's alright to speak your mind and express controversial opinions, no matter how much this may offend other people; and that it's always been "cooler" to think for yourself than to embrace party lines. Going along with the herd will surely make your life easier and more economically secure, but it's also a lot less psychologically rewarding than going against the grain. Then again, every choice that one makes in life represents some sort of a tradeoff, and most people eventually learn that they have to pay some price - often a very high one - for being true to themselves or having too much fun. So it's up to each and every one of you to make your own decisions.

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO...UM...HANG TEN OR DRAG RACE, I SALUTE YOU

Last issue I indicated that I've been listening to lots of moody, atmospheric 60's garage bands of late, since their overwhelmingly morose vibe currently seems to mirror my own bittersweet feelings all too closely, but at times such tragic stuff can become so damned depressing that I feel a compulsive need to compensate for it by listening to something that's perversely optimistic, naively innocent, and just downright fun. The best surf, hot rod, and motorcycle vocal tunes from the early- to mid-60's serve that escapist, mood-altering purpose

admirably, and it doesn't hurt one bit that I live only a few blocks from the Pacific Ocean or that less than a mile away from me is a beach favored by local surfers. Only the periodic presence of the fog here in coastal NorCal ruins that sunny Southern California ambience that's so intrinsic to surf and hot rod music, and even though I never learned how to surf, I can still drive my beat-up old RX-7 out onto Highway 1 and "zoom zoom" any damn time I want to. I'd even be able to crank out the RIP CHORDS and HONDELLS on my CD player while cruising along, if only some lowlife motherfuckers hadn't broken into my car a few months ago and stolen the damn thing.

When one thinks of vocal surf (and hot rod) music, the first group that probably springs to mind is the BEACH BOYS. And for good reason. After all, by virtue of their enormous popularity they essentially defined the style - even though some might argue that they didn't exactly originate it - and as such they exerted a profound influence on the vast majority of subsequent vocal surf bands. In that sense, they had an impact on surf music that paralleled that of the BEATLES on beat music. And even though some of us might prefer other purveyors of beat to the BEATLES - e.g., for Mike Stax it's the PRETTY THINGS, for me the KINKS and YARDBIRDS, for others the STONES - or other exponents of surf/hot rod music to the BEACH BOYS, no one in their right mind can deny that the BEATLES and BEACH BOYS were more historically significant and more musically influential. So it's entirely appropriate to begin with the BEACH BOYS when discussing surf music reissues.

As it happens my timing turns out to be impeccable, since all of the early BEACH BOYS albums have just been reissued in a new digitally-remastered format. Specifically, the following two LP's-for-one CD are now available (in the clear jewel cases; don't buy the older non-remastered versions in the black jewel cases), all with bonus single tracks: "Surfin' Safari" plus "Surfin' USA", "Surfer Girl" plus "Shut Down, Volume 2", "Little Deuce Coupe" plus "All Summer Long", "Today" plus "Summer Days and Summer Nights", and the live double, "In Concert" plus "Live in London". The sound quality is astonishingly good, as it was on the two BEACH BOYS "Greatest Hits" volumes released last year, so now the reverbed guitars, soaring multipart doo-wop-ish harmonies, and Brian Wilson's irresistible pop melodies sound more beautiful than ever. There are two serious problems with the BEACH BOYS, however. First, they were so damned clean-cut and square-looking (Dennis Wilson often excepted) that even the world's lamest jocks, frat boys, and dorks liked them, so much so that they were later invited to play at schmaltzy presidential inaugurations. Second, their innumerable hits have been played so often on the radio that it's hard for them to still sound even remotely fresh and exciting in this day and age. These are almost insurmountable obstacles for those of us who hate squares and like our music obscure - including most of the readers of this very magazine - but the fact is that the high quality of the band's music somehow manages to overcome them. The truth is that several of their hit songs are so emotionally transcendent that they sound fabulous even in the wake of thousands of hearings. Is it really possible, e.g., to ever get sick of stupendous tracks like "Wendy", "Don't Worry Baby", and "Help Me, Rhonda" (all summertime romance classics), "I Get Around", "409", and "Shut Down" (quintessential hot rod songs), "Fun Fun Fun" (self-explanatory), "Don't Back Down", or "Catch a Wave" (a terrific paean to surfing)? Not really. Better still, if you purchase these new reissues of their early albums, the first three of which are absolutely mandatory, you'll be able to hear plenty of equally good songs that haven't

JEFFBALE

been overplayed ad nauseum. If you don't believe me, check out amazingly cool tracks like "Drive-In", "Little Girl (You're My Miss America)", "Land Ahoy", "Girl Don't Tell Me", "I'm So Young", and "Cherry Cherry Coupe".

However, there are also several lesser-known vocal surf/hot rod/cycle groups who put out stellar songs in the BEACH BOYS vein, some of which are better than many of their mentors' tracks. I'm thinking specifically here of the RIP CHORDS and the HONDELLS, both of which were ad hoc "bands" whose members frequently changed. Sundazed has once again done everyone a service by re-releasing the two RIP CHORDS LPs on CDs, with the addition of bonus tracks. As

with early JAN & DEAN, the doo-wop vocal influences are especially pronounced on the RIP CHORDS' first LP, "Hey Little Cobra". This not only contains the great hit title song, but is also filled with terrific FOUR SEASONS-style multipart harmonies, revved-up guitars, and excellent tunes (many of which were penned by Terry Melcher - Doris Day's son - and future BEACH BOY Bruce Johnston), especially the greaser-approved "Here I Stand", "The Queen" (which has echoes of DION), "Trophy Machine", "Gone", "Ding Dong" (which proves once and for all that great r'n'r songs can be perfectly meaningless and nonsensical), "Don't Be Scared" (a bonus track), and the sublime "She Thinks I Still Care". But I actually prefer their second LP, "Three Window Coupe". Although it may be more uneven in quality, it features some of the very best RIP CHORDS songs, such as the title track (a paean to the "toughest machine in town"), "Gas Money", "Hot Rod U.S.A.", "Surfin' Craze", "Summer U.S.A.", and my personal faves, "This Little Woodie" ("She don't complain about the cheap gas I feed her") and "My Big Gun Board" ("She takes 35 feet/And the ride's real sweet"). If you like hook-filled pop melodies and angelic vocals, it's impossible not to start loving these songs after hearing them only a few times. As is typical of Sundazed reissues, the sound quality on both CDs is excellent.

Perhaps even better were the HONDELLS, the brainchild of entrepreneurial producer and songwriter Gary Usher. The German label ATM Records has just reissued two (rather pricey) CDs full of HONDELLS material, around seventy songs in all. Volume One, "You're Gonna Ride With Us", contains only recordings from 1964, and is absolutely killer. After opening with their hit "Little Honda" (originally written and performed by the BEACH BOYS), it showcases a large number of top-quality motorcycle-themed rockers with heavily-reverbed guitars, beautiful harmonies, and haunting melodies, such as "Hot Rod High", "Ridin' Trails" (about the virtues of off-road cycling), "Death Valley Run", "Two Wheel Show Stopper" ("All she needs to be complete/Is a groovy little chick on my buddy-seat"), "A Guy Without Wheels" (about the hardships faced by those without bikes or cars, especially vis-à-vis the "hon-eyes"), "You're Gonna Ride With Me", "The Pack" (about a "rough" gang of biker bullies), "Mean Streak", "Black Denim" (about "evil" cyclists who wear black instead of sissy whites and pastels), and the plaintive "He Wasn't Coming Back", in my opinion one of the greatest songs ever written in the surf/hot rod genre. On top of these spectacular vocal tracks, there are lots of twangy, uptempo instrumentals like "Black Boots and Bikes" and "The Rebel Without A Cause". I had originally planned to discuss Volume Two as well, but another obsessive collector snatched it up before I could get my hands on it, for which I'll never





forgive him - at least not until I manage to acquire a copy of my own.

Rather less absorbing is a recent RONNY & THE DAYTONAS' "greatest hits" package, also released by Sundazed. RONNY and company were actually a bunch of lads from Tennessee with (country) music biz connections who decided to jump on the BEACH BOYS bandwagon. Naturally, this CD contains their big hot rod hit, "G.T.O.", as well as cool but lesser-known singles like "California Bound" and "Bucket T". There are also several other fine songs here, including "Beach Boy", "Hot Rod City", "Little Rail Job", "Antique '32 Studebaker Dictator Coupe", "No Wheels" (another sad lament), and "Tiger A Go-Go" (recorded under the moniker BUZZ & BUCKY), some of which have a countrified tinge and/or a slightly understated production. But there are far too many schmaltzy, orchestrated romantic ballads on here for my taste (the best of which is "Teenage Years"), and these end up making this collection much less appealing than those discussed above. Still, the uptempo songs are pretty darn fun.

All of these releases intentionally evoke the idealized, indeed mythic, image of California, a spectacularly beautiful place on the margins of the mundane "real world" where people can leave all their cares behind, where the summer is endless, where the sun is always shining, where big glassy waves are constantly rolling in, where there are "two girls for every boy" and all of them are "cuties" and "honeys", where the cars and bikes are sleek and fast enough to "shut down" all their competitors, and where everybody can have non-stop "fun, fun, fun" - as long as they can afford to buy gas and avoid the bad asses wearing black denim. If ever there was a cornball teenage paradise, it's reflected in the collections described above. Listening to these records also evokes a much more innocent, naive "whitebread" era, one that had barely emerged from the haze of the conformist, repressive 1950s, when lots of kids really were "true to their school", when the optimistic "spirit of America" was alive and well, and when the worst thing you could imagine was running out of gas, wiping out, and being ignored or dumped by girls or boys that you had crushes on. A time and place in which rolling power blackouts, AIDS, high school shooting sprees, \$2 gallons of gas, Kwanzaa, and half million dollar beach cottages were mercifully unthinkable. In short, a nostalgic American "Golden Age" which, if it ever really existed anyplace other than in someone's fertile imagination, is now a distant memory that is apparently irretrievable.

But the amazing thing is that this aspect of the California myth has never been simply a fantasy. It was always rooted in a grain of truth, and as such it continues to live on in the hearts and minds of Americans (and even foreigners) to this very day, thanks in part to idealized portrayals by the film industry and popular surf bands like the BEACH BOYS. And there's nothing at all wrong with that. Believe me,

for those of us who grew up in some big, industrial-belt city or in some backwards town in the American heartland, coastal California really is something of a paradise, despite all the problems nowadays caused by population growth and astronomical housing and energy costs. After all, elements of the myth managed to lure a cynical, rebellious Midwestern misfit like myself out here over twenty years ago (in the process causing me to snub my nose at a full fellowship to attend grad school at Harvard), and I've been here ever since (except for brief periods when I accepted temporary academic posts in other parts of the country). Cost of living issues will no doubt someday compel me to move to the coastal regions of the Pacific Northwest or New England, but until such time (or until I'm offered a lucrative and/or fascinating job in some far less desirable locale) I'm staying right where I am.

The reality of the myth became even more clear to me last year, while I was living in Newport Beach's beautiful Balboa Peninsula, about ten yards from the boardwalk that runs along the beach. If I had been a young, privileged, carefree, and square-looking youth instead of a poor, broken-down, middle-aged, black-denim wearing bad ass myself (albeit one with a heart of gold), it *would* have been a veritable paradise. Everywhere I looked there was the warm sun, the sparkling surf, bikini-clad "honeys", expensive roadsters, good fish, burger, and taco joints, and bars. That

obviously isn't my particular "scene", but if I'd been a jock or a frat boy being subsidized by my parents, it probably would have been. And this "beach scene" is, after all, only one part of the overall California myth - another important part is that this peculiar state has always been known as a haven for all sorts of nonconformists, rebels, artists, and misfits, including rock'n'roll-oriented countercultural people like myself. And even though I've never really been interested in participating actively in the aforementioned "beach scene", and am no longer really able to even if I was so inclined, I can appreciate it for what it is: mindless, hedonistic, and generally harmless fun for teenagers and young adults going through an often confusing and sometimes painful transitional phase in their lives. And no matter what one thinks of all those clean-cut, fun-loving nimrods, one can't help but be in awe of the physical beauty of the California coast. Nor can one fail to enjoy the optimistic, innocent vibe of the best surf and hot rod music, no matter how jaded one has become. Sometimes, when I get up in the morning and life seems particularly hopeless and not worth living, I open my front door, let the sun and ocean breeze in, and crank up the HONDELLS on my stereo. Almost immediately I'm reminded of just how beautiful and enjoyable life can be, and I begin smiling, laughing at the absurdly trivial but appealingly guile-free lyrics, and feeling very happy to be alive. And that's not something that one should take lightly, much less be contemptuous of, in this day and age. (I think there may be a lesson lurking here somewhere for my fellow r'n'r maniac Dimitri Monroe, who seems particularly despondent of late and obviously needs to get the fuck out of Cincinnati.) +

All of these releases intentionally evoke the idealized, indeed mythic, image of California, a spectacularly beautiful place on the margins of the mundane "real world".

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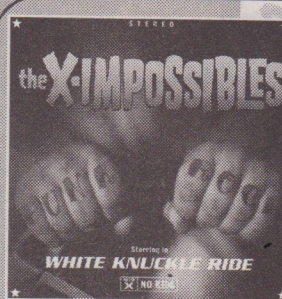
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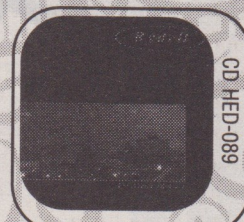
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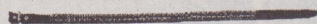


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The word "bitch" just doesn't work as a term of endearment, unless it's in reference to a female dog. The Load Levelers, a band from Washington state, seem to think it does. Their new self-titled CD (on Ain't That A Rat's Ass Records, PO Box 25453, Seattle, WA 98025) is fast psychobilly-punk-metal-redneck rock 'n' roll. The songs are high-energy, but I just don't dig the wanky hesher guitar solos, as demonstrated on "Knucklebuster" and "King County Jail" (which starts out as a fine punk rock song, but is then ruined by the guitar solo). There's a banjo on "Big Luvin' Woman", which I guess is supposed to be a humorous love song, with the lines "Well I'm gonna see my bitch, 'cause Daddy's coming home, he's gonna scratch that itch". The subjects covered on this CD are stereotypical redneck fare — trucks getting repossessed, fighting, sex, misogyny, pimping, chasing underage girls, hitting the road and the bottle, jail, and death. All things that have been sung about countless times before, and will continue to be. I don't recommend the Load Levelers versions, however. The possibility of them being a musically fun band is sadly undermined by the metal guitars and offensive lyrics. If the Load Levelers (even their name is difficult; try saying it a few times in a row!) are trying to satirize a segment of the population, they don't make it clear that that's what they are doing. Whether it's all an act or the real thing, I really can't tell.

In contrast, there's the Unknown Hinson CD, "The Future Is Unknown" (Uniphone Records, 7810 Whitmore Lane Charlotte, NC 28227 www.unknownhinson.com). I generally don't like "novelty" acts, but this CD makes me laugh out loud. Eighteen tracks of Southern cracker weirdness make the point that there are people who really think and act this way. Calling it to our attention, but not living it, Hinson doesn't resort to insults and name-calling. The music is basically country (Mr. Hinson is quite talented, not only with his wit, but with his guitar as well), with some forays into rock 'n' roll, Hawaiian, lounge, surf, and metal. The best part is Hinson's North Carolina pronunciations of certain words: "wohmerns" (women), "fahr" (fire), "spectackler" (spectacular), "winders" (windows), etc. His character is named after his father's name on his birth certificate ("Unknown"), he tells tales of being in prison, and he waves a small gun in his photographs. Highlights: "Venus Bound", where his dissatisfaction with the women on earth prompts him to look elsewhere for subservient bearers of his children: "I'm building me a rocketship, to go where wohmerns don't give me no lip, baby I'm Venus bound"; the mock-horror, self-deprecating "I Make Faces When I Make Love", his attempt to warn his woman how scary he is while making himself the joke; "Man to Man", a sex-change song about his ex-wife Stephanie, who has become Steve; "Closer To The Light", about being on death row and the impending execution; "Hippie Girl", where he lusts after a philosophy-studying, pot-smoking, halter-top and bell-bottoms-wearing member of a younger generation — but his awkwardness shows: she's not impressed with his outdated ways, and he fails in his attempt to seduce her; "My Heart's On The Line", where Hinson trades his sexist-creep attitude for a pleading, dare I say it, almost sweet approach; and "Theme From The Unknown Hinson Show", which is reminiscent of Nelson Riddle's "Theme From Route 66".

A semi-novelty 7" that will be cute once a year is the Coffinshakers' "Trick Or Treat With The Coffinshakers — Halloween E.P." (Reanimator Records, PO Box 1582, Ann Arbor, MI 48106). The song on side A, "Halloween", is country-surf-rockabilly-spook-rock that would be better

without the annoying Vampire Voice that the singer uses. He also sounds like he's singing below his range, which makes me cringe. "Bloodless", on the B-side, is better. The ghoully theme is toned down a bit, and the singer has thankfully dropped the silly Transylvanian lisp. Not much variation in the drumbeat, but I like the rolling guitar. "Die Die Die" is good as well — short, sweet (well, not the sentiment), and to the point, with a nice twangy guitar break in the middle.

I recently picked up a new 7" from Finland, Mary Ann And Her Ragtime Ramblers (Goofin' Records, PO Box 63, 01601 Vantaa, Finland). The name of the band is somewhat deceiving, as there is

Hop, Skip and Jump by Devil Doll



nothing ragtime about their music; this is sparse rockabilly with a good amount of reverb and a much-appreciated steel guitar. Mary Ann isn't an extraordinary singer, but I like her voice — it has a nicotine-stained glamour to it, and the actual recording of this record gives it a 1950's feel. "Hang On Folks, Here We Go" is a train song, with Mary Ann singing the refrain "Choo, choo, choo, choo" (which sounds like "cheep", due to her accent) until she seems to run out of breath...it's OK, Mary Ann, light another cigarette and press on. The rhythm seems a little awkward, like the band can't seem to get it all together. Maybe M.A. and the boys haven't been playing together for very long. The steel guitar making train sounds is a nice touch, and M.A.'s relaxed delivery and cigarette crackle make her unique. She doesn't overdo it on the hiccups, yelps and growls, a trap that many contemporary female rockabilly vocalists fall into in an attempt to make their singing sound more authentic. The B-side has two covers, "Hey Little Dreamboat" (originally done by Rose Maddox), where Mary Ann is perkier, but this version is unremarkable. "Flying Saucer Boogie" (first recorded by Eddie Cletro And His Round-Up Boys) rocks — it puts the steel guitar through a workout, and the band's personality shines through. I also noticed a connection between these two covers that may or may not have been intentional: the guitar-player on Rose Maddox's 1955 recording of "Hey Little Dreamboat" is Eddie Cletro, who also recorded the original "Flying Saucer Boogie".

The fine folks at Ace Records Ltd. (42-50 Steele Road, London England

NW107AS, www.acerecords.co.uk) have put out a reissue CD of material recorded from 1950 to 1960 on Goldband, a small Lake Charles, Louisiana label. "Bayou Rockabilly Cats" (various artists) has 26 exceptional tracks, as well as good artwork and lots of info in the booklet. There's not a lot of what I would categorize as actual rockabilly songs on this CD, but rather a varied musical offering that contributed to, or was an example of, rockabilly's evolution. There's a strong geographic element to the swampy, primitive, and passionate music. Highlights: "No No Baby" (originally a Clarence Garlow R&B song), covered by Al Ferrier and the Boppin' Billies,

***"I'm building me a
rocketship, to go where
wohmerns don't give me
no lip, baby I'm Venus bound"***

-Unknown Hinson

HIT SQUAD

which is a wonderful combination of rockabilly's incessant rhythm and country fiddles; "Jambalya Boogie", by Eddie Shuler's All Star Reveliers, a fabulous blend of rockabilly, boogie, R&B, country, hillbilly, cajun and zydeco, with French lyrics to top it all off; the lovely guitar and casual pace of Hopeless Homer's country-rockabilly "New Way Rockin'"; three songs which show a very strong country blues influence, "Love Me Just A little Bit" (by Bill Carroll and the Neches Valley Boys), "I Love That Woman (Right Or Wrong)" (by Red Le Blance and His Crescent Boys), and "What Is This Thing Called Love" (by Al Ferrier and His Boppin' Billies); the delightful "Feel So Good" by Bill Carroll, which makes me do just that; the beautiful guitar and amusing lyrics on "Texas Woman" (Buck Wheat and His Wheatbinders), a slightly snide ode to Lone Star state gals (as well as a mention of one who might be from Tennessee) who are as casual about their morals as he is.

I was thrilled to find Glen Glenn's "Missouri Rockabilly, 1954-1959" 10" (Stomper Time Records — Phonographic Performance LTD, Ganton House 14-22 Ganton Street, London England W1V 1LB). This record is a must-have. Because this is a reissue of vintage recordings, I recommend the warmer sound of the vinyl format over CD. The cover art is simple and beautiful: a clear b&w photograph of Glen Glenn, guitarist Gary Lambert, and band. Glenn moved to California from Missouri in 1947 and discovered rockabilly with the help of Fred Maddox (of Maddox Brothers and Rose) in 1954. Glenn kept some fine company, as he is pictured on the back of this record with Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. I have heard the first track, "Everybody's Movin'", hundreds of times, but I still get chills when I play it. The opening guitar part, the foreboding beat, the slow build that breaks

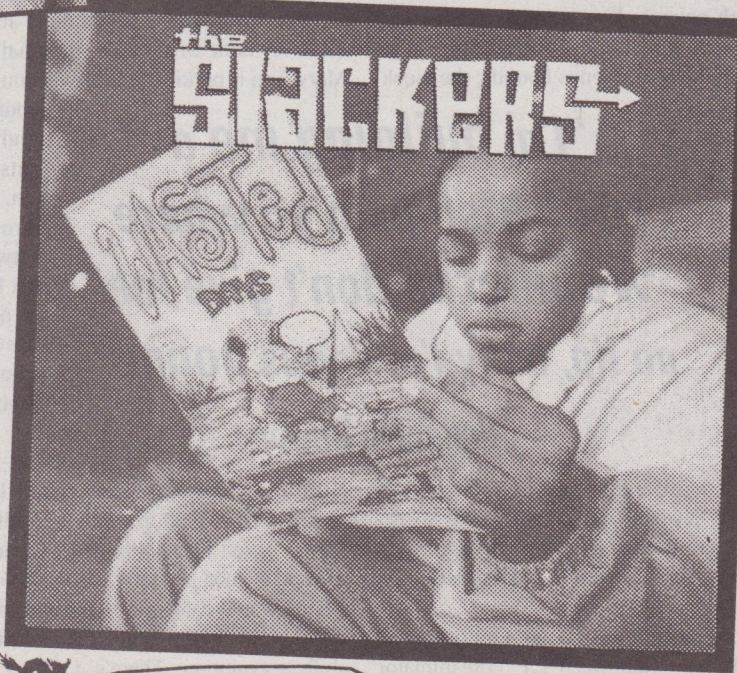
into barely-restrained wildness in the chorus...wow! More than just sounds, the physical elements of rockabilly are so apparent in this recording. The rasp and thump of fingers on the upright bass strings, the echo, the primal surges of emotions in Glenn's voice — they all become something tangible. To me, this is one of the songs that define rockabilly: steamy, rhythmic, hormone-driven. Few recordings made today come through the speakers so alive. The 14 tracks on this record include other songs he's known for: "One Cup Of Coffee" and "Blue Jeans And A Boy's Shirt", as well as harder-to-find material like the mid-tempo love ballad, "Kathleen", that comes dangerously close to being sappy, with the conservative female back-up singers and teenage lyrics; however, Glenn's voice and Lambert's guitar hint at the sin that lies beneath. His lecherous sneer returns on "Would Ja", where his voice quivers with lust as he pants out the chorus. "Jack And Jill Boogie" is a good rocking tune, despite the poor sound quality. An alternate take of "Blue Jeans And A Boy's Shirt" is included, and it's great. There's something added, an instrument or effect that I can't identify, that's unusual for a rockabilly song. If anyone knows what it is, please tell me! Also on this record is a version of Big Boy Crudup's "That's Alright Mama", the same song that propelled a young Elvis Presley to fame.

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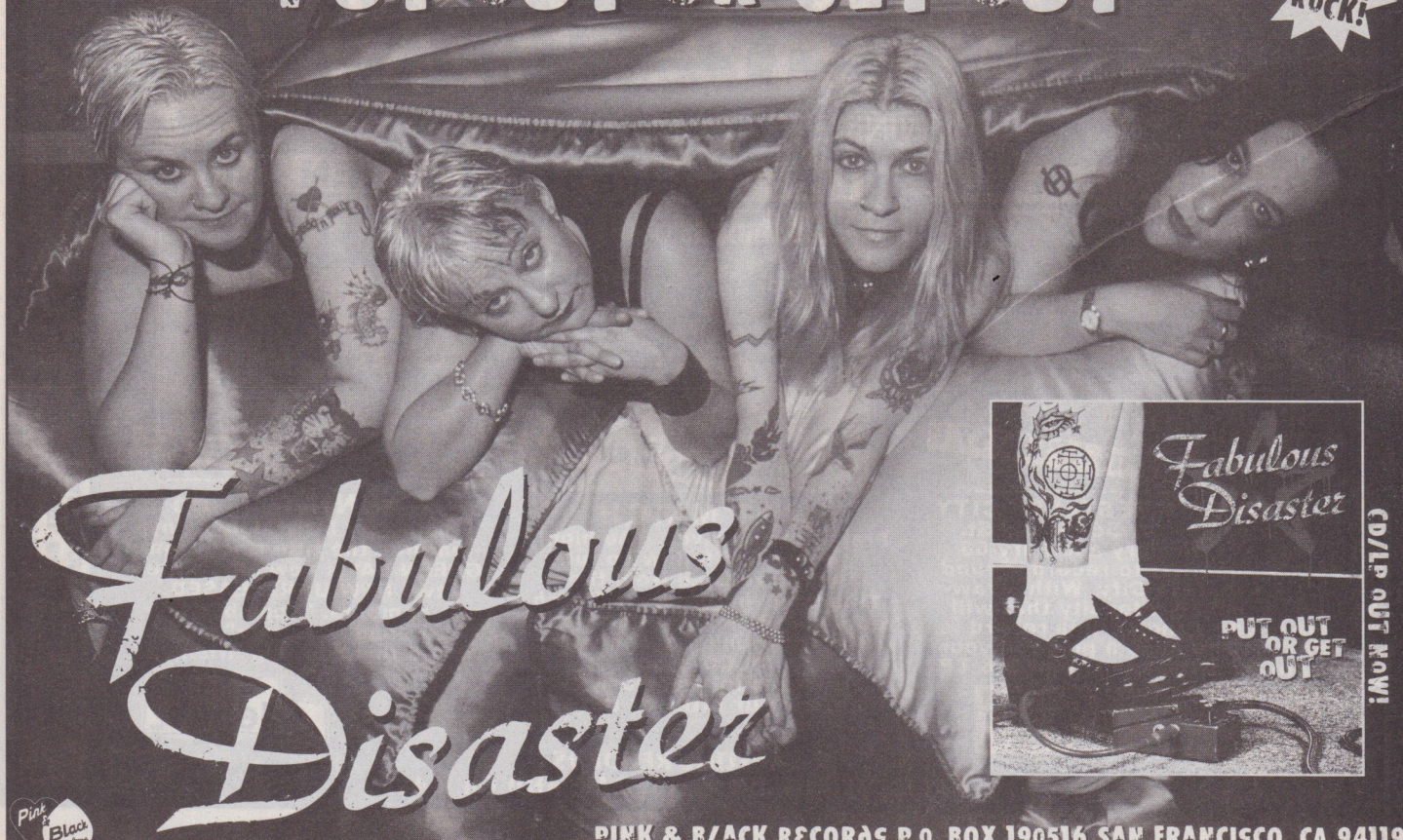


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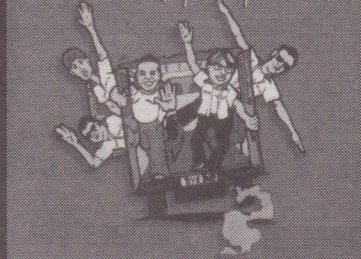
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I Wanna Be Like Nikki Corvette

by Betsy Palmer

Life is never as good as it is the summer you are 16. For me, 16 was all about boys and rock 'n' roll...and if those two things were combined, then hey, all the better. But it's not the actual "things" that are important the summer you are 16, it's the intensity of their importance. That, my friend, will never be the same again. Now 36, boys and rock 'n' roll are still in my life, but I will never again down a bottle of aspirin because my Mom unknowingly washed the towel, hidden under my pillow, that the Stray Cat's bass player sweat on and handed me at the show I snuck into on a school night, y'know?

I spent the summer of '81 hanging out with Lisa B. and Lisa K. Lisa B. was a year older than me, she smoked cigarettes, and drove a red convertible — yeah, it was daddy's. Lisa K. was 2 years older, a freshman college dropout, she popped those fake black beauties they sell in the back of *Cosmo*, and uh, smoked cigarettes. We had a soundtrack



that summer...Nikki and the Corvettes LP on Bomp Records. We lived that fucking record. It was the 80's, so of course we made a cassette of it for the car. Now, since cruising down Main St. Cortland, NY took all of about 2 minutes (still does), we'd swing up around through the college campus and do it again – over and over – "Summertime Fun" blaring...us singing along at the top of our lungs...I doubt we even knew what we were cruising for...someone to buy us some Boone's Farm...or Bob E. X – that dark brooding boy who cut class, wore a black leather jacket, and played guitar in the local punk rock band. Yeah, come to think of it, that's sounding about right. So maybe we latched on to the Corvettes' record because of the great cover – 3 cartoon girls in striped shirts



sittin' in a red convertible..it worked for us, y'know? We wanted to BE Nikki and the Corvettes. We wore striped shirts, tight jeans and heels, crimped our hair, and droye around in that fucking car all summer, singing along to, not one, but to the many anthems on that beautiful piece of vinyl. Then again, maybe it was because I just got my first guitar, we wanted to start a band, the songs were easy enough for me to play, and there hadn't been any all-girl bands since the Runaways (I discovered the Go-Gos and the Bangles a little later on). Either way, what it all really adds up to is those songs...the catchiest fucking bubblegum punk you'll ever hear in your whole goddamn life.

And they're all about...that's right...boys and rock 'n' roll.

Nikki Corvette's apartment looks like a freaked out rock 'n' roll corner store. It's the fans' candy shop. It's packed with music fanzines, figurines, dime store paperback beatnik books, buttons and badges, posters and signed glossies, LPs and CDs, and Happy Meal toys.

There are fully stocked magazine and postcard racks, shelves and shelves of little curios and chachkies, and the ever present color – Hot Pink – popping through wherever and whenever you try to give your eyes a rest. Nikki is exactly as I've pictured her all these years. She is cute as hell, in black leggings with an oversized torn, t-shirt falling off her shoulder. She has the biggest, brownest eyes on the planet and a teen dream pout to boot. When she speaks the raspy squeak of her voice sounds like a little

Lolita who sneaks cigarettes every chance she gets...just like on the record. She is one sexy bitch, but then she's .oh so adorable too.

“...we'd get through off a lot of shows when they found out there were girls in the band...”

Betsy Palmer: How old were you when you started to see bands?

Nikki Corvette: I'd been going to shows since I was 15 — left home when I was 16 because my Mom wouldn't let me see the MC5. It was SO worth it.

BP: Did you get backstage?

NC: No, but eventually all the MC5 asked to meet me and I was just like, “No way! These are my heroes!”

BP: What was it like in Detroit when you started, was there a scene?

NC: Actually, there was a scene. Everybody plays Detroit — even little bands. They might be playing like 8 cities in the whole US, but they always play Detroit. So it would be all the same people at the shows. Y'know I loved rock 'n' roll and I always wanted to be in a band and I just sort of started

accidentally. This guy from a band called Flirt was booking a club called the Red Grape. I was talking to him about how I wanted to start a band and the next thing I know somebody gives me a flyer that's got a band, Nikki Corvette and the Convertibles, booked at the Red Grape. I didn't have a band, but I knew all the musicians around town so I just got a bunch together.

BP: Wait a minute, when did they start calling you Nikki Corvette?

NC: Well, it was originally Sylvain Sylvain's name. He called himself Ricky Corvette and he was gonna' retire that — since I was named Nikki, I just sorta ended up with it.

BP: Did you know the New York Dolls?

NC: Yeah, me and Pete my guitar

player, and Steve (Stiv Bators) and Miriam from the Cramps (now Norton records), and James Sliman, who managed the Dead Boys, and some of the people who ended up in Teenage Jesus and the Jerks (with Lydia Lunch) — we were all big Dolls groupies from the Cleveland/Detroit area. We used to just travel around and we all got to know each other...and at the time, most of us weren't in bands, we just all ended up in bands...but we used to spend a lot of time with the Dolls. Me and Pete went from Detroit — Cincinnati — Cleveland — Ann Arbor — back to Detroit on their Winnebago with them, which was, uh, pretty wild.

BP: I'll bet. (girl giggles)

NC: I knew the Dolls enough that David Johansen and one of the other guys helped me write a paper for school — my first year in college. We hung out all night and I had to write a



paper on "Desire Under the Elms" or something like that. It was like 6 in the morning and I had to be at school at 8. It was a real good paper. From 15 or 16 to my early 20s I was just crazy. I was the only person in high school living with a rock 'n' roll band. (more giggles)

BP: So who played that first gig?

NC: It was me and Pete on guitar and the guy who booked the show, Skid Marks, on bass, and Bob Mulrooney from the Ramrods on drums...I think, but I wouldn't put my life on it. That was the Spring of 78. We had picked a bunch of covers and written two songs together, "Young and Crazy" and "Criminal Element" (which ended up being the first single). We didn't practice. We gave them cassettes of the songs. We got to the show and I go up to the sound guy, "Can I just hear myself in the mic?" He was like, "You've never heard yourself before?" I'd never heard myself sing. I'd never never been on stage before...but luckily, I knew a TON of people. The club was full and we opened with "Fun, Fun, Fun" by the Beach Boys and I knew right then it could never get any worse than this. It had to go up from there...and we pulled it off. We got booked for the next 3 months. I was in a band for 3 months before we even had a rehearsal. I was like, "Cool, this is easy."

BP: How long did you play around Detroit like that?

NC: Well we had to get real band members. We had a hard time keeping people in the band. We went through a lot of musicians, mostly because people in

Detroit weren't kind about women being in rock 'n' roll. They made it really hard on girls. Y'know it's like, there was Niagara, the singer in Flirt, the Sillies -- all singers, no actual guitar players. A lot of guys didn't want to play on shows with us.



BP: Because you'd get more attention?

NC: Yeah, but even with famous bands we'd get thrown off a lot of shows when they found out there were girls in the band...the Pretenders, Dave Edmunds, Nick Lowe -- maybe it wasn't the bands -- it could've been management.

BP: Did you get put on a lot of shows too? Like shows with other bands with girls in them?

NC: Oh, yeah! But there weren't that many so it would be the same line up every time. I met every band that came through town. I'd ask where they were from and what cool clubs were there and if they'd help me book shows...and I eventually got to the

point where I could book us all across the country just by people I knew...they'd give us a place to stay. At that point none of the Detroit bands were touring -- maybe the Romantics -- but most of the guys were just sitting there. That's why we did better than them -- we played a lot...umm...in NY (the Mudd Club), Boston (the Rat), North Carolina...

BP: When did the other girls become part of the band?

NC: If you wanna pause, there's only one way I can answer. (At this point I pause the tape recorder. Nikki goes into the bedroom and pulls out two HUGE Hot Pink Scrapbooks. Tape player back on -- Nikki is flipping through flyers, reviews, photos, playlists, fan mail) I'm seeing '78. So for the first six months we didn't have the girls.

BP: Did you want the back-up singers, or was that Pete?

NC: That was probably Pete, but I always wanted to be more punk than he did. We'd do interviews and they'd ask who our favorite bands were. He'd say ABBA and I'd say the Sex Pistols. Whatever I said, he would contradict it. We were always fighting -- opposite sides.

BP: So the girls were rotating?

NC: Lauri, the girl that looks most like me, was Pete's girlfriend after me.

BP: You were "with" Pete when you started?

NC: No, we'd been broken up for awhile. We had a very stormy relationship. It worked against us on a personal level, but for us on a creative one.

BP: But the songs that he wrote had a lot to do with the sound of your voice, didn't they?

NC: Yeah but recently, he just admitted to me he made a mistake and should've let me be the punk singer I wanted to be 'cuz I had a good punk voice. If you listen to the album on vinyl, that was much more his vision (note: the LP was mastered at a higher speed than the band recorded at — a common recording gimmick at the time — especially when pop sounding female vocals were involved, it made it brighter and cuter and diabetic coma-inducing). The CD sounds more like my vision. I always wanted to rock harder than he did and I was just wild on stage.

BP: (Flipping through one of the scrapbooks I find a letter from Greg Shaw dated Oct. 14, 1978) "Joey, Thanks for sending me the Nikki Corvette and the Convertibles records, they're actually excellent. You know how it is with girl bands, 90% concept 10% talent, but these ladies really can sing and the style is perfect." Hmmm...

NC: When we moved out to LA we all lived together in early '79 in order to sign a deal with Bomp. We went into the studio with Ronny Weiser — the King of Rockabilly, and did the "Honey Bop" single. Greg kept putting us in the studio with people like Kim Fowley. Kim was so obnoxious. You weren't allowed to talk. He was a studio Nazi who thought he was God. He didn't have the background to go with his ego.

BP: So how'd you finally get the record recorded?

NC: We went back to Detroit after 7 months — long enough for me to know everybody in every band in LA. We just weren't happy. Everyone wanted us to sound a certain way, and we went back to Detroit to do it our own way.

BP: So at the time you recorded it, you were happy with it?

NC: No, the speeded-up thing bothered me. I think Peter and Greg did that. At the time, I didn't know anything about recording. I was just like, "This is SO cool." To me, it was just like I didn't care. Even if someone said "This is a bad deal", I probably still would've signed it because I never expected to be in a band, much less making records and making money playing. I was just so excited about being in a band making my music. People were coming to see me, and that's all I cared about. Putting out records was the icing on the cake. So I probably wouldn't have made any changes. I learned a lot from



Bomp (laughs). I got a music business education.

BP: So basically, after the recording was done, they sped up the tape...and wasn't there a problem with the artwork?

NC: They changed the artwork and that REALLY pissed me off.

BP: You didn't know about the artwork until after it came out?

NC: They sent us a copy in Boston or upstate NY. We got on the phone and were like, "What's this? We don't wanna be the Archies!" We weren't the sweet

little bubblegum band that everyone seemed to think we were. We had one review where this guy said we did the best version of "I Wanna Be Your Dog" since Iggy...BUT no matter what we did, I always looked cute.

BP: Honestly, I love that cover! There were no credits on it and just a photo of the girls on the back, so I assumed you girls played the instruments too. And I know I'm not alone.

NC: That was never my intention to sell the band as an all-girl band. I didn't even realize that was happening until the last couple of years when people told me the same thing. The picture only has the girls in it because besides Pete, it was all revolving musicians.

BP: Someone, okay, Greg Shaw, told me that it was Pete who wrote all the songs, and I thought "No way could a guy write those lyrics."

NC: Oh, that was me.

BP: I mean, when I first started writing songs I stole those ones pretty much note for note and word for word.

NC: Well, I have to admit when I saw the Donnas recently on TV, I never really thought about it until I saw them live — the guy that helped them start the band was one of my original fan club people — I was like, "This is me 20 years later" — it really tripped me out. Here's what's cool about the Donnas. (Nikki puts on the Donna's song "Give me my Radio" — there is a line that goes, "I wanna be like Nikki Corvette.") I see these bands and I guess I knew at the time I was wearing a lot of stripes, but then I saw all these kids that were trying to be like me wearing striped shirts and I mean, it wasn't a fashion statement. The 5,6,7,8's had a cover band that did all our songs...there's Candygirl, Bitch School, the Fevers, here's the Bobbyteens wearing striped shirts covering "Young and Crazy" (showing me the record), and this (the Donna's cover with Nikki and the Corvettes on the wall). Russell and Tina (from the Bobbyteens) came into where I work one day and Russell was wearing one of these Nikki and the Corvettes t-shirts that he made (holds it up).

BP: And it's Hot Pink! And he didn't

even know you!

NC: They found a copy of our LP in a thrift store. They were in town, went to Bleeker Bob's and asked if he had any more stuff by us, and he told them where I work so they came in for my autograph. They made buttons (note: pink buttons) and brought a ton of people to meet me. The next thing I know, I'm getting records from all these girl bands that are totally influenced by me.

BP: Yeah, there's not a ton of female role models out there. There were the Go-Gos...

NC: The Go-Gos changed their sound after they heard my record. I knew them. Kathy Valentine told me they were listening to it a lot! Before that, they were more punk.

(I can't keep my hands off the scrapbook. There are flyers for shows at different clubs...reading the bands...Ultravox, Captain Beefheart, the Split Enz, Martha and the Muffins, Nikki and the Corvettes...another listing for a week in LA at clubs reads...Red Hot Chili Peppers, Circle Jerks, Fear, Nikki and the Corvettes. Then I see a radio station play list, Oct. 3rd, 1980...there's Jim Carrol "People Who Died", Joy Division, Yoko Ono "Kiss Kiss Kiss", Nikki and the Corvettes, Elvis Costello, the B52's, Devo!)

BP: It's amazing the kind of music that was happening at the time. Majors were taking chances on things other than Styx and Foreigner. When did the band break up?

NC: That's hard to say. After Bomp, we got rid of the girls and became a rockabilly band.

BP: So your band, that influenced so many people, was only around for a couple of years?

NC: What's really amazing is that so many fans have copies of the first single and there were only 1000 of them. I know 'cuz I owned the master tapes and we cut and folded the sleeves in my mom's basement.

BP: I think it's a big world, but it's a small world when it comes to such specific musical tastes as female-fronted bands that are considered underground.

Y'know, not the Dixie Chicks. And other female musicians are the ones seeking this stuff out. I mean, when I'm flipping thru a magazine I'm always looking for the girls with the guitars.

NC: It's like 20 years later and I like obscure, but when it's me, WOW, I can't believe that I influenced these people. The music business was making me hate the music, and that wasn't worth it. And if you told me I had to live without music, I just couldn't. It's just too important, so I couldn't let the business make me hate it.

BP: This scrapbook is amazing. Is this



the source of the stuff in the CD booklet?

NC: Yeah, I'm hoping people will get ahold of me with more photos to add to it, cuz there's stuff out there I'd love to get ahold of - videos.

BP: Okay, here's an article in a Detroit paper about bands fronted by women.

NC: We always thought we were like the Shangri-las meet the Ramones.

BP: Were you choreographed?

NC: NO!

BP: Good! I read an old Bomp press

release that said Stiv brought you to the label, but obviously that's not true.

NC: We may have been with Bomp before Stiv was. I'd known Stiv for a real long time. Oh, you'll like this (grabs yet another photo album - shows me a picture of a group of people dated July, 1976). That's Max, the Dolls' roadie, me, Miriam, Michael Sticca, and Stiv. We were all in the same hotel room.

BP: Look how young Stiv is! What a hotty!

NC: Here's one from 1977 of me and Stiv in front of CBGB's.

BP: Oh my God, that big X scar that was always on his chest is fresh in this photo.

NC: That happened the night before - some girl came on stage and slashed him. So we got from this...to this...(shows me a photo of the two of them from '87 - they're hugging.)

BP: That's so cute.

NC: Yeah, 'til you look at his eyes.

BP: Okay, let's talk about boys.

NC: I used to be pretty blunt with guys in bands. I'd meet them and I'd go, "This is the deal, I'm not gonna fuck you. If you wanna hang out that's cool, but if you're looking to get laid, I'm giving you plenty of time to move on...it worked really well...I didn't always stay true to my word, but I tried.

BP: You were single the whole time you were in the band?

NC: Kinda. I had boyfriends, but I was on the road and they weren't, so I got a lot of groupies. The guys in my band hated me cuz I got more groupies, but hello, it was the late 70's early 80's, I had on a short ass skirt - which wasn't "in" at the time.

BP: Do you know about the GBCs?

NC: The what?

BP: The Girl Band Geeks (a term coined by Kim of the Muffs).

NC: The groupies I got were freaks. They loved me. Today they would probably be called stalkers. They'd find me.

BP: Were they dorky?

NC: Most of them were musicians.

BP: Most of the real hot guys in bands in the mid-to-late 80's were really turned off by female musicians. I never got laid. (somewhere in NY Belvy K. is now laughing so hard the JD is coming out of his nose)

NC: I never had that problem. I hung out with so many bands, and 90% of the time they treated me like an equal. Even the big stars. I mean, I was like, "Okay, I'm a fan, but just because I'm a fan doesn't mean I'm not as good as you". We almost toured with 999, but we had other commitments.

BP: Okay, back to music. Which songs of yours do you like?

NC: "Young and Crazy," cuz it sounds the most like me. I like "He's a Mover" and "You make me Crazy" – the edgy stuff.

BP: What about "Boys, Boys, Boys"? That was an anthem.

NC: Yeah it was, and it really did sum up what I was all about, which was boys and rock 'n' roll...you know, the car thing just came with it. I could've done without the cars, but not the boys and rock 'n' roll. It was simple, but life was simple then, that's what I cared about and that's what I sang about. I wasn't going to make a big political statement. We were inspired by the Beach Boys...y'know, stuff you could listen to 22 years later and it would still make you happy. You don't have to think about it. You can just give in to the music and go, "Yeah! This is a lot of fun." Oh, check this out (pulls out a box of letters and shows me stuff from Lenny Kaye, Ron Asheton, James Williamson.)

BP: Were you doing the band when you were writing back and forth with these

guys?

NC: No, this is when I was younger – like '75-76. I would just meet bands and write to them and get them to write back to me. Me and Miriam used to do that. This is from JD from Patti Smith Group and Ivan...

BP: What other girls did you hang out with?

NC: I didn't get along with other women until the last 10 years. By the way, here's one of my favorite letters.

BP: It's from Patti Smith...I recognize the handwriting from the sleeve of my "Wave" LP. That is so cool!

NC: I have a picture she drew me of a horse. I met her at her first show ever in Detroit. I had just broke up with my boyfriend Pete, and he was there with his new girlfriend. I went and met the band and told Patti my whole sad story, and she said "you just pick a guy in my band and he's yours."

BP: True sisterhood. Who'd you pick?

NC: I didn't pick any of them. I was too intimidated.

BP: Hey, do you feel lucky you were in a band pre-AIDS?

NC: Oh God YES, thank God. The worst thing you had to worry about, herpes, was not even a big deal. I never got VD from messing around.

BP: Stiv said he never got VD because the germs were scared of his blood.

NC: I believe that. I would be.

BP: He was such a slut.

NC: Yeah, he was. (girl giggles)

BP: (Looking at more photos) Who's that? I'm in love.

NC: That's Elliot from Wayne County's band.

BP: No way! Last year I met an Elliot in upstate NY. He owns a vintage guitar shop and he was telling me he used to be in the Electric Chairs...wow, that's him back then, huh? Small world.

NC: Here's another one for you punk fans (shows me an autographed record not unlike a John Cougar cover – good looking guy in a Jean jacket) Do you know who he is? As far as my freak fans go...

BP (reading autograph): Oh, my god, "For Nikki Corvette, Love, GG Allin" Is this his first?

NC: Yes.

BP: Before he was completely

GG'd. (Nikki hands me some fan letters from GG), "Bought your LP, think it's fantastic. If you're ever in the Boston area maybe we can gig together, love, GG, stay hot" – How sweet.

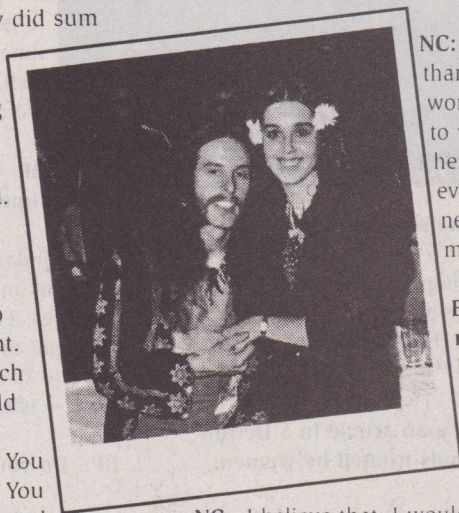
NC: I know, how scary is that?

BP: Geez, he sent me a full condom tied in a knot back in '87 when my all-girl band was on Bomp. It was wrapped in a t-shirt and there was a cassette tape in there too – where he was talking dirty. The funny thing is, I totally forgot about it, and last year when I started working at Bomp I picked up this 10" and it's called "Masturbation Sessions" – they fucking pressed it! (reading GG album song titles) Hmmm, "Pussy Summit Meeting." So, I guess GG Allin was a GBG. So you got to "hang out" with a lot of guys in bands in the 80's...not as a groupie but as an equal. But stuff happens...

NC: The only way I remember them is by going through my record collection. I saw one of those "Best of the Big 80's" CD collection info-mercials, and I realized that I either knew or slept with most of them.

BP: The best one?

NC: Oh well, I turned down both Iggy Pop



and David Bowie. Iggy made it a joke with my boyfriend at the time. He'd call Pete before a show and say, "Are you bringing Nikki? Is she gonna fuck me tonight?" I had a poster of Bowie that Iggy gave me. He wrote something about how we never did it on the back, and when I met Bowie I had him sign the front – he turned it over and read what Iggy wrote and said, "You didn't?" and then he gave me his undivided attention...mmm...but I was with Pete then. When I got back to our hotel room and told Pete I turned Bowie down, He was like, "Are you crazy?"

BP: Any other names to drop in here?

NC: I dated Daniel Ash, Adam Ant, and Brian Setzer all within one week...oh, one thing you must print. I LOVE Kid Rock. I want to meet him. He's like the average asshole from Detroit who loves women. I kinda' like that pimpin' attitude and he rocks. He rocks hard. +

"I dated
Daniel
Ash,
Adam
Ant, and
Brian
Setzer all
within
one
week..."



Betsy Palmer is currently working on a collection of personal anecdotes about Stiv Bators. If you have a story involving Stiv for her, please contact her at ImissStiv@aol.com, or write c/o Bomp Records, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510

Nikki Corvette is a fan. Nikki Corvette is an equal. Nikki Corvette IS Rock 'n' Roll. If you're a guy reading this, thinking she is something else, then ask yourself: if you were a girl and there were guys whose music you fucking understood deep deep in your heart, and they were hot, AND they wanted to sleep with you...well? What would you do?

Nikki Corvette is the author of "Rock'n' Roll Heaven" published by Boulevard/Berkeley publishing group – <http://www.Berkeley.com>
The Nikki and the Corvettes LP has now been released as a CD by Bomp, this time mastered at the original speed and with the original artwork.

Tina "Bobbyteen" Lucchesi on Nikki and the Corvettes

To me, Nikki Corvette is the ultimate rock 'n' roll girl. Snotty, sweet, sassy bubblegum rock 'n' roll describes the Corvettes to a 'T'. When I first picked up this LP about 10 years ago, on a gamble and not knowing anything about them, I thought, "WOW! Look at how cute and hot these chicks look – like a 70's Shangri-las with a Ramones attitude or something." The LP totally blew my mind. How awesomely simple, hooky, and catchy the songs were. There is no way you can go wrong with killer song titles like, "He's a Mover," "Backseat Love," "I Wanna be your Girlfriend," "Let's Go," etc...Nikki and the Corvettes have been a huge inspiration for me and all the bands I've been in. I still never get sick of listening to the record to this

day. It's great that Bomp Records has released this classic gem on CD with extra bonus tracks. Now more rock 'n' rollers can pay homage to the queen of bubblegum punk – Nikki Corvette. Long Live Rock 'n' Roll Forever.

Tina's Lipstick Records is now producing a Nikki and the Corvettes tribute compilation. So far the bands include the Bobbyteens, Candygirls, the Peeps, Supersnazz, Bannana Erectors, the Pinkz, the Plungers, 5,6,7,8s, and Bitch School. For more info, write to Tina at 1154 Powell Street, Oakland, CA 94608.



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MRR says: "National Razor, a talented bunch of punks from the Baltimore area are writing melodic punk anthems that belie their years. The LP fairly leaps off the turntable when "Dead Heroes" initiates the punk rock ride. This is one of those rare punk LPs that hold your rapt attention all the way through. Great! Fucking AI!" (BR)

Morphius



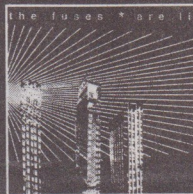
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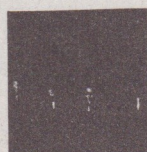
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Brothers and sisters, since we last convened many glorious and mysterious things have occurred, some of them in the world proper, some of them in rock and roll, none of them on television. The Motherfucker Revolution is on, full throttle, all or nothing. There's a lot of Rawk talk to cover, so let's dive right the fuck in...

BAD OBSESSIONS
w/ THE SCREAMGRINDER

HALFWAY TO GOD : THE HALFWAY TO GONE STORY

Exploding like a sack of boiled man gravy from the tail end of a split single with Virginia's kings of muscle-riffed redneck pummel, Alabama Thunderpussy, last year Jersey's Halfway To Gone quickly established themselves as snarly rock and roll motherfuckers of the highest order. Boasting a sound that melds the heavy waves of sunbaked southern stoner rawk with the rats and ambulances knife fighting roar of 80's street metal, and a look that screams Biker gang on a rampage, HTC are a lethal dose of pure American Bad Assitude. Their debut full length, “High Five,” has just been released on Small Stone records, and a US tour, complete with flamethrowers, chainsaws, and drunken metal chicks will ensue this summer. I caught up with bleeding light Lou Gorra on the eve of High Five's release to talk about these snake-spitting earth shakers...

SG: New Jersey?!

LG: It's great, man, there's so much going on here, The Jersey shore is like the hub of great rock. People seem to think you have to go all the way to New York, Philly, or Boston to catch some cool rock and roll, but we've got Solace, Solarized, Atomic Bitchwax, Core...Zakk Wylde's place is 15 miles from here...so you're never too far from a good rock show. On the weekend, at least. I mean, New Jersey's still a pretty blue collar state.

SG: Halfway To Gone strike me as a working class hero kind of band.

LG: Definitely. I drive a truck, Stu teaches, and works at a guitar

store. Nobody's getting fat off of being in this band.

SG: It's all for the love of rock and roll.

LG: Yeh. Rock and roll and whiskey.

SG: So you started out in Solarized.

LG: I did two records and a tour with them. But while we were on tour, I started writing songs that were a lot different than the stuff Solarized does, so that's why I formed Halfway To Gone. Solarized have more of a space rock sound, We have more of a southern tinge to what we do, with some Motorhead kind of British metal thrown in.



YOU CAN TAKE THE METAL GUY OUT OF NEW JERSEY: But you cannot stop the rock. Halfway to Gone in action.

SG: You are raw, filthy street metal, if you ask me...

LG: You can't the metal out of a metal guy from New Jersey, that's for sure.

SG: But Halfway To Gone will, of course, be labeled 'stoner rock'.

LG: I don't really care. I mean, if it's going to get you to buy the record than it's cool, but the fact is, if you like southern rock, or metal, or rock and roll, you're gonna get the Halfway To Gone record anyway. Plus, you know, what music doesn't sound good when you're stoned?

SG: Right on. Still, I think it's the lamest media tag ever.

LG: People keep talking about stoner rock being the next big thing, but I saw grunge come and go in the space of six years, and I'm still playing the same kind of music. Heavy music's been around since the 60's, and it's always been obscure, and you'll always have to look to find the good stuff.

SG: I don't think any of us care if it ever gets 'big'. It just means that everybody's gotta be an active participant in the music they love.

LG: Oh, yeh. It's incredible how cool everybody's been, and how willing people are to help each other out. I think the internet is great for that. If we were some indie rock band fifteen years ago, we'd never be able to pull this off.

SG: Things have been going pretty good for Halfway To Gone so far.

LG: Peaches and cream, brother. Great support...our first split was on Game Two records, but we didn't know who the other band was

gonna be. We were thrilled when we found out it was Alabama Thunderpussy, those guys are like our brothers, and it was great to be paired, right off the bat, with a band that already has some notoriety on the scene.

SG: Speaking of the split, what was "Darktown Strutter" about? I mean, besides the obvious?

LG: Rotten women. If I think about it, that's pretty much the theme of the whole new record. That song's about some stupid motherfucker that finds some girl and beats the shit out of her, and convinces her that it's her own fault. It's not autobiographical.

SG: So, you wouldn't suggest using it as a life philosophy?

LG: Well, you can do any stupid fucking thing that you want, I suppose. But guys like that don't usually need my help.

SG: How's the new record sounding?

LG: Killer. It's got full-throttle meth rock, doom, tons of slide guitar...we've got one track that's full on swamp rock—acoustic guitar, harmonica, and foot stomping. It runs the gamut. After the record's out, we're gonna do a US tour, and then this summer, we're probably going on tour with 5 Horse Johnson in Europe.

SG: That's a lot of road work.

LG: Yeh, I love it, tho. What other job do you work for an hour and a half per night? A tour is like a 30-day vacation...whiskey, smoking, women, and rock.

SG: More rock than women on the heavy end of the spectrum.

LG: Some bands are just too damn heavy for the ladies. Warhorse would crush any little girls that were around when they play. When I toured with Solarized, though, there were some women at the shows. But the music's pretty testosterone-heavy, don't you think?

SG: Yeh. But it's not Limp Bizkit date rape music either.

LG: But it is pretty macho. Songs about snakes and evil chicks.

SG: Solarized toured with Alabama Thunderpussy, right?

LG: Those guys are total road dogs. Nobody in Solarized had toured before, so they showed us the ropes. It was pretty amazing.

SG: Anything to relieve the boredom between gigs?

LG: Inter-band boxing matches in the parking lot.

SG: Cool. Ever have to fight your way out of a gig?

LG: Not yet, but I'm looking forward to it.

For more info on HTG, check out their web-site...www.halfwaytogone.com

I GOT A WAR

I walk into the Design Center, surely the most sinister and God-awful building in

SLEAZEGRINDER

Boston. For one thing, the doors open just from looking at them, which is beyond creepy. And the ostentatious interior, with its marble floors and smoked chrome walls, is enough to irk the working man to distraction. All I can think about is that these screwheads are busy peddling their hotel lobby curtain fabric at 200 bucks a square yard when people in my neighborhood are going hungry. 20% of the homeless population in Boston work *fulltime* jobs, and these creeps sleep in safety. Obscene.

So here I am on a delivery, standing by the brass elevators, staring at the wall like it's the window, plotting some ill-conceived revenge. Along comes another member of the proletariat, squishing through the shag, looking equally surly. Only he's got his jeans rolled up too high, he's wearing big ass Docs, and he's got no hair. Just what I need. Usually, I can ignore such mundane vulgarity, but this guy's sweatshirt causes me to audibly snort. In bold white (natch) letters, it's says "ARA- Anti-Racist Action". Oh, brother.

"C'mon, man, what's with that shirt?" I ask him.

"I'm anti-Nazi", he deadpans.

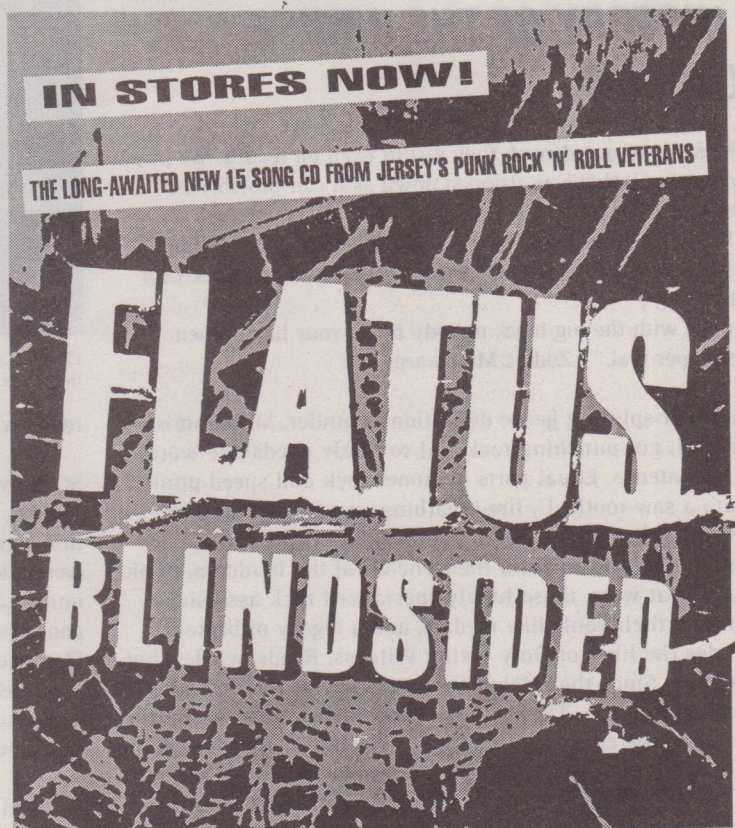
"Listen, if you have to go around publicly proclaiming you're not a racist, it probably means you are one."

"That's Bullshit," he says, "There's a small segment of skins that are racists, and that's where the stereotype comes from. But that's not what skins are about. Skins are about working class pride."

"Dude", I tell him, skins are about getting drunk with your looka-like buddies and bashing in some gay guy's head with a pipe."

"That's not what I'm about at all."

"Yeh. Well, you're flying the flag. I call that guilt by association,



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at best."

"Fuck you, man", he brilliantly counters. "You even know any skinheads?"

"No. And I don't know any vampires either, but I'm pretty sure they're not my kind of people."

This circular conversation continues all the way to the 8th floor, when the elevator pings open to the movie poster design company that I have to deliver some porn to. But I don't want to leave this guy as stupid as he was when I found him. "Listen, man", I tell him, "the problem with you, and the Goddamn Muslims, and every other racial extremist in this city is that none of you are living in reality. The reality is that this is a big fucking city filled with all different kinds of people trying to get through the day without hurting themselves too much. You don't have anymore right to call yourself anti-racist than you do being racist. You don't make the rules. Everybody's already here doing their Goddamn thing just fine without you or your opinions, and all your shirt does is agitate people. So grow up, get on the fucking bus like everybody else, and grow some hair."

Undaunted, he says, "Let me ask you something, big mouth. You've got long hair, a beard, and a leather jacket. Does that automatically make you a biker?"

"Abso-fucking-lutely".

"Well, aren't bikers one of the most racist segments of society?"

Well, he's got me there. Of course, I'm not really a biker anyway, it's just that Zodiac Mindwarp taught me how to dress.

THE HISTORY OF THE BRUISE: MILLIGRAM

"Our guitars are so overdriven, they distort even on record. We play fierce rock and roll that's as stripped down as it can possibly be."

-Jonah Jenkins

"I think there are other bands people would be less comfortable throwing things at. Milligram, for example."-Ian Adams, Rock City Crimewave

"Tough it out with the big boys, nobody holds your hand when things are super real." - Zodiac Mindwarp

Tearing hair-splitting genre definitions asunder, Milligram's brand of feral, gut-punching rock and roll only needs one word to describe it—intense. Equal parts of stoner rock and speed punk morph into a saw-toothed, fire-breathing, supersonic murder machine with wheels greased to meet Jesus in triple time. Recruited like Berserkers from the trenches of the hardcore, punk and metal sweat wars, these highly specialized rock assassins carry scars on their souls like medals, and a legacy of brutality that includes the likes of Only Living Witness, Roadswallow, Slapshot, and Stompbox. Since their debut two years ago at Boston's annual biker rawk apocalypse, The Redneck Fest, Milligram have continuously scorched the coast with blinding live shows, and their debut EP, 'Hello, Motherfucker', managed to contain the biting and the bleeding for a brief, but glorious, 8-song assault. With their first full-length (tentative title: "Death To America") due this summer, and a cadre of empire-building gigs to burn through, Milligram are cocked and loaded for the revolution. I talked to their twisted genius frontman, Jonah Jenkins, to find out what fuels this infernal machine...

SG: You started your rock career in Only Living Witness...

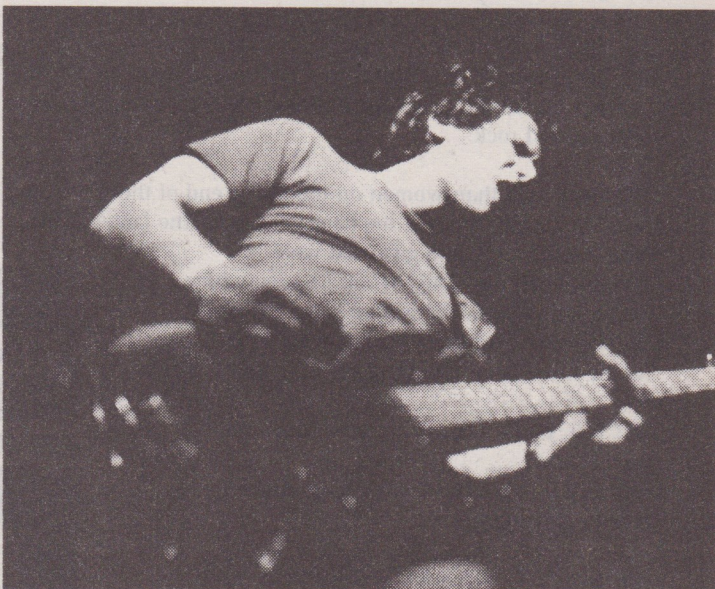
JJ: Yeh, back in '89. I was a hardcore band, but we ended up a lot more rock/metal, like SSD...I was in Milltown in '94, which was much more of a rock band.

SG: I've heard the term 'Emo' thrown around...

JJ: So have I, but I think that's kind of absurd really. I hate that term anyway, but I think it came from a lot of the hardcore fans of Witness checking out this new rock band, y'know, and saying "well, it's more melodic, the vocals are real emotional"...but I when I think of 'Emo', I think of things like Rites of Spring, and we didn't sound at all like that.

SG: Milltown broke up because...

JJ: Milltown was a democracy, which is unfortunately the least efficient political system. I had a certain vision of the band that didn't fit in with everyone. I'm sure I was called a dick more than once, but there was a lot of record label involvement, and on a major label there are certain compromises that you're supposed to make, that I



FIRE-BREATHING, SUPERSONIC MURDER MACHINE: Milligram comes equipped with the power to rock you silly. Standard.

really wasn't into.

SG: So you got Milligram, the Super Band together...

JJ: People always say that, it's a lot to live up to. But it was great to find a group of people who were on the same page musically, who were interested in playing devastating music. Minutemen were an immediate influence, because we had short songs, the lyrics were gonna be succinct, the song structures were gonna be precise...Black Flag, the Stooges, we saw the parallels that we'd known for many years gel when we started playing together. It was somewhat melodic, but totally feeding back the entire time. The louder, faster, more ridiculously intense we played, the better it sounded.

SG: And the songs are pretty simple...

JJ: That's one of our goals, to keep it as simple as possible. Some people have complained, in reviews, or wherever, that there aren't enough lyrics in the songs, there's only three lines...well, fuck you, same as Discharge, same as Black Flag...

SG: Even so, they're pretty thoughtful. You seem to be channeling "The Pain"...

JJ: The whole aesthetic of Milligram is escapist, but I think we're all reluctant intellectuals, so I can't really dumb it down. I work at MIT, I've worked at Harvard, I'm around people all day that talk about things like politics...we try not to be heavy-handed in Milligram, so we try to take the things we see and strip away a lot of the heaviness. In other bands we were in, there was a lot of finger pointing going on, and I don't really believe in that anymore. So although the songs come from a similar aesthetic as our old bands, we try not to be judgmental...we'd rather look inward. Unfortunately, when you start looking at yourself, you start seeing your shortcomings. So my lyrics have become more personal and self-deprecating, I guess, because at this point I realize that all I can do as a vital member of the human race is to try to make myself a better person. What can I do? We're a bunch of fuck-ups. So we write songs about it.

SG: Milligram have a reputation for being too smart for rock and roll.

JJ: Really? Because I work at MIT? I just work there, I could just as easily be pushing a broom. The bands we hang out with...Cracktorch, 5ive, Quintaine, RC Crimewave...these are brilliant people, with amaz-



WHEN IN BOSTON: Stop by and say hi to Jonah. He looks friendly in this photograph, no?

ing minds who don't want to tell people how to live their lives, but know they've got to get some shit out, so fuck it, let's have a good time with it. And some people dismiss it as "bar room rock." "I did the same thing when I was young, I couldn't understand why anybody wanted to listen to anything that didn't talk about how fucking angry they were. But all these bands tap into something base and primal, and I think we do the same thing. There's a certain element of people in rock music today that appreciate things a little more fuzzed out, a little more freakish, a little more sub-culturally oriented, than the stuff that's striving to be on MTV. It's like Scissorfight. Again, Chris[Iron Lung] is a brilliant guy, but he chooses to write songs about fucking people in the ass and monkeys with sticks, chooses to tap into some carnal instinct...he's just not interested in rolling around in all his degrees although, had he chosen a different life path, he certainly could've done that. Unfortunately, what that would've meant was being fake for a bunch of phony people. When I was working at Harvard, people would always ask about degrees, you know "do you have a degree?" Well, who gives a fuck, I have a life. I'm a creative member of the human race, what're you doing? Are you just striving for acceptance among a bunch of people with similar backgrounds? I want to meet

new people, go new places, I want to read, see new movies, hear new music, I don't necessarily care about how intellectually elevated somebody is. I'd rather know what's going on inside someone's head, especially if they can filter it out creatively.

Bad Addictions From The Fifth Dimension

SG: You've got a whole Choke/Rollins stage stalker image...

JJ: Well, Daryl was in Slapshot, y'know. All of us come from bands that were more aggressive than Milligram. Not that Milligram shies away from aggression...

SG: Are you a punk rocker, or what, Jonah?

JJ: I grew up punk. The first metal band I got into, strangely enough, was Nuclear Assault, because they played so fuckin' fast. As the years passed, and everything started to blur, I got way more into metal. There are metal records that are just essential...Slayer's "Reign in Blood", Mercyful Fate's "Don't Break the Oath" and "Melissa", here's a guy singing in falsetto the whole time, a total dork, really, but those are amazing records. Certain Maiden records, certain Priest records, you can't deny that those are major influences on what's being played now. Of course, I was also into Seige, Freeze, the F.U.'s.

SG: The line's always been that punk somehow has more integrity than metal.

JJ: People thought that, and it was probably true at one point, but the Sex Pistols admitted they sold out, and that was the whole premise of the band, so where's the integrity in that? I don't think there was that much difference between a band like the Sex Pistols and Guns 'n' Roses, except for musically. They were essentially the same thing, except the Pistols took it way too far, and unfortunately Guns got sucked into their own excesses and couldn't pull out of it in time. They got sucked into the money machine, whereas the Pistols retracted from all that, they were repulsed by it. Some people call Milligram punk, some call it metal, but it's just stripped-down rock and roll. It's loud, it's heavy...do you like it? That's what really matters.

SG: Right. Which brings us to Stoner Rock. There's a lot of long-haired, bearded freaks that love the Milligram.

JJ: The majority of the people involved in stoner rock, whether it be the labels, the distributors, the artists, the fanzines, the people that run the websites...these are people that truly love the music, not because they're trying to make a buck. Sure, some people might be driven by the money, but that's because they've spent a lot to get to that point. I hope that labels like Game Two and Meteor City get the money they need to keep going, because they're putting out the most amazing records. That's why we're working with Tortuga, because they really fucking love the music. The same spirit that drives Stoner rock is what initially got me involved in the punk scene, the sense of community. Once you've connected with an audience, even just an audience of one, you have this commonality to work with in a conversation, and there's always branch-offs that you wouldn't have otherwise. Y'know, I would challenge anyone in other circles, for example business or academic circles, to truly be able to tell if the person they're hanging out with is a good person. I can usually tell. Not necessarily by the bands the person likes, but by the way they interact with me, or the way they discuss the music or shows they've seen, what kind of person this is, whether they're gonna fuck me over or not. I've been pretty lucky that way, and I think a lot of my friends have too.

HIT SQUAD

SG: I think the rock community is a lot like the Biker community, where it's one of the last places where there really is an established code of conduct, where people treat each other like bro's. A band comes to town, you give them a place to stay, something to eat, a beer. You might not know them, but you already do, really.

JJ: Absolutely, I think that's a very important connection. Most of the people in my life have been that way. I've run into situations where everybody thought they were on the same page, and problems resulted because somebody broke the code, and nobody really knew what the code was to begin with. In fact, I've done that. But as a whole, I think it's better that the rules aren't written down, that we make them up as we go along, and that you just don't fuck with other people. I used to tell people in high school, they'd say "I listen to punk," or "I listen to hardcore." I used to say, "I listen to don't fuck with me music." And life was good.

SG: Milligram release schedule?

JJ: The full length? It's about half written, and hopefully we'll have it out this summer, if all goes well. It really depends on Tortuga's release schedule, but we'll be done recording it by spring.

SG: Still thinking about calling it "Death To America"?

JJ: I don't think so. That was one of Zeph's brainstorms, and it pissed everyone off, so we said 'Ok, we're gonna use it' (laughs)

SG: I still think the T-shirts would've looked awesome, though.

JJ: Well, then we were going to use that title for the EP, but we figured, since it's just leftovers from "Hello Motherfucker", we're not going to call it anything at all. There's not even going to be anything on the CD, maybe just a picture, or something, but really it's just a companion CD.

SG: So, why didn't you just release all the material together?

JJ: Well, when we were putting the first CD together, we knew creatively how we wanted the record to hit people. Songs like "Not OK" and "Altamont" hit people differently, they're not quite as concise and concentrated as the songs that we had on the first EP. So we're releasing this one to show people the other stuff that we recorded at the same time, that maybe shows a different side to what we do. And since we're only charging, like 4 bucks for it, nobody should be calling us up and complaining.

It's highly unlikely that anybody will. The "Hello Motherfucker" companion CD is a swirling vortex of enflamed muscle and low tone crunch that's guaranteed to boil the blood. For more information on Milligram, check out their website at www.milligram.com

STONER ROCK ÜBER ALLES

Monster Magnet - "God Says No" (A&M)

The original plan bubbling over in the Monster Magnet secret lab was for "Powertrip II" to be written during the grueling summer months in the jungles of Vietnam, resulting in a bloody pastiche of "Apocalypse Now"-inspired madness and combat-shocked rock savagery. Well, that didn't happen. Magnet firegod Dave Wyndorff stayed home to play video games and fuck strippers, and didn't get around to writing on "God Says No" until five days before the band hit the studio. So if songs like "Doomsday" sounds to you like Dave was sitting around the campfire with Rob Zombie, fanning the flames with 20 dollar bills and snort-

ing over the gullibility of the modern rock consumer, and if "Gravity Well" strikes you as neo-psychedelic devil blues junk that's as about as welcome on a Monster Magnet record as fanged snatch on your wedding night, and if the cyberized reworking of "Medicine" just makes you want to listen to "Spine of God", well then, you're an astute motherfucker. However, also on deck is the teeth-rattling power riff orgy of "Heads Explode", and the snaky sexexecutioner grind of "All Shook Out", which rank as two of Monster Magnet's best. All in the lazy afternoon of an evil genius. The fact is, Dave Wyndorff can save rock and roll any Goddamn time he wants. Apparently, he's content to let us sweat it out a little longer. God's got his own opinion, but Sleazegrinder says yes.

Sons of Otis - "SuperJumboFudge" (Man's Ruin)

On the official Sons of Otis site, some hyperventilating genius of a fan mentioned that listening to these guys was like "fucking a hundred women at once". That's the kind of recommendation I admire, so I had to check these Canadian fuckers out. Well, I'm here to tell you that listening to "SuperJumbofudge" is more like strangling a dozen anonymous coeds in a secluded forest upstate over the course of several moon phases, while the rest of your time is spent in your mother's basement, surrounded by violent pornography, Nazi paraphernalia, and the innards of neighborhood critters artistically strewn about the place as you write reviews for obscure stoner rock websites in the nude. Sons Of Otis claim to be from outer space, and unlike Sun Ra, I believe them. This is hardly the outpouring of humans, never mind sane ones. Songs last for mere seconds or for what seems like hours, with acid-for-blood guitars spattering a canvas of leathery skin pounded into submission by hamfists. It's like a gas attack in a Japanese tattoo museum. And the vocals take the proverbial cake and shove it down your confused throat...like a reanimated severed head in a garbage can, gnawed on by rats and rolling down a hill, growling death threats in Martian. Just disturbing, really. If that coke-shooting, self-eviscerating gorepunk from Skinny Puppy was kidnapped by a gang of South American doomheads who preferred machete massacres to rehearsal, the resulting taped confessions might bear a passing resemblance to the Sons of Otis. 4 stars, obviously.

Acid King - "Free" (Man's Ruin)

Acid King's head honcho Lori S. is the kind of mindblowing stoner queen that makes you want to stay in your room all day and draw pictures of her slaying dragons in her bell bottoms and pigtails, and AK's lowest end, White Bronco-chase-speed sprawling riff rock is as inviting and out-of-sighteous as a warm bath of virgin's blood. "Free" is a four-cylinder rip ride with some loose sleazy rider theme. Opener "Blaze In" cranks the throttle and the onslaught of druggy fuck metal tears a hole in the sky, guitar notes like burning locusts cascading down the edge of Iron Witch mountain. "Free" and the awesomely and honestly titled "4 minutes" are star-spangled, mud-squeezing odes to the glory of teenage Satanic sex torture, and "Blaze Out" leaves your ragged ass lying there in the dirt, jonesing for another dose of the King. I tell ya, man, if the future of rock-n-roll rests on the ample hips of Lori S, well then, the kids are alright.

Stitched Frankenstein-style on the fray end of AK's sludge are two deep and rambling cuts by the Mystik Krewe of Clearlight, a New Orleans super stoner jam band. Well, as "super" as you can get with bulky Crowbar members lumbering around. They sound like Fatso Jetson crawling with lice. The press sheet says, "Depending on their mood, they can be a laid back blues band or kick it into overdrive as a raw jam band." I say patience, please. A drug free America comes first.

Soul Preacher - "When the Black Sun Rises, the Holy Men Burn" (Beserker)

The purveyors of long black fingernailed sonic witchcraft have returned with another heaving, aching ball of bitter wax that will have you rolling around on the couch in agony, sweating out the Klonopin hor-

rors. Soul Preacher's death tripping doomcore is so damned heavy that the floor beneath my stereo just caved in. Featuring tongue-fisted geek slobber vocals, zombie crust bass riffs, and a strangled guitar sound like Sanskrit Sabbath riffs wrestled out of petrified wood by drunken, goat killing cowboys, this is rock's equivalent of Vincent Price and his spooky creaking doors. Don't know what they're driving at with the auspicious album title; perhaps the devil's afoot. Black Doom certainly seems about right when you are knee deep in the serpentine death silt of faith-collapsers like the title track and the even more turgid "Something to Slow You Down", or the skull-dust and spittle Viking prayer of "Kingdom". And were you not eyeless in Babylon by that point, Soul Preacher plunge the hopelessness stake deep into the red with the closing 16 minute, sub-ambient, flesh-crawling tone drone "Deadnothingspace", a track guaranteed to have all your clocks running backwards and two headed lizards scratching at your windows. This is some nasty assed, dead -by-dawn rock and roll, so hide the skin Bible and keep it locked in the basement.

Dozer - "Madre De Dios" (Man's Ruin)

Sweden's dune buggy wipeout kings churn out another walloping dose of Midnight Sun-baked bliss rawk that rides on waves of endless riffs and boogie metal breakdowns, a buzzing mudpile of sideburns, freak flags, and foxy ladies. You just can't help but to get caught up in Dozer's infectious inclination towards dizzy optimism and melodic grooves. Right out of the gate, "Let the Shit Roll" finds Dozer right where we left them, kick starting their motorbikes on the surface of the moon with the same rictus grins and volcanic powerchords Tony Iommi would display back when he was screwing Lita Ford. Aside from brief psychedelic freakout flourishes like "Earth Yeti", this is one solid pastiche of molton stoner core without a pebble of snarky irony. Of course, the less righteous among us, the critics, the cynics might cast an

SLEAZEGRINDER

inclined eyebrow over the proceedings, duly noting that Dozer sound so much like Kytiss that sand ought to pour out of the jewel case when you crack open "Madre De Dios". But they'd be missing the point. Dozer play swirling, drug orgy music for the people, the greasy haired 17-year old runaways in army jackets and Wranglers who'd stare straight into the eyes of Jesus and ask him for some beer and pussy without flinching. And those motherfuckers never even heard of Kytiss.

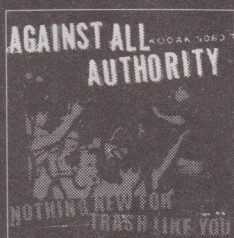
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Bloodshot- "Velveteen Fields"
Rock City Crimewave- "Rise Motherfucker Rise"
Foetus- "Flow"
Roachpowder- "Atomic Church"
Swamp Witch Revival- "The Date Rape Anthem"
Jill Kurtz- "No Molestes"

As always, you can reach me via e-mail at Kenzilla69@hotmail.com. If you want to send me anything, be on the safe side, as I get evicted a lot, and send it to the corporate address: Sleazegrinder. c/o the Weekly Dig. PO Box 120503, Boston, MA 02112

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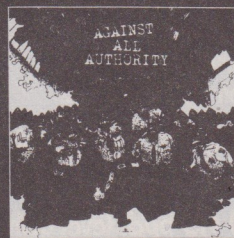
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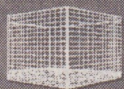


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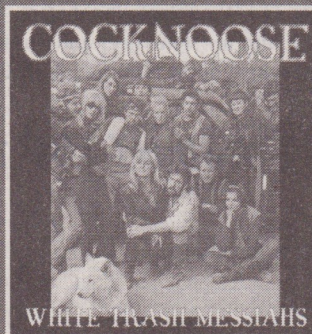


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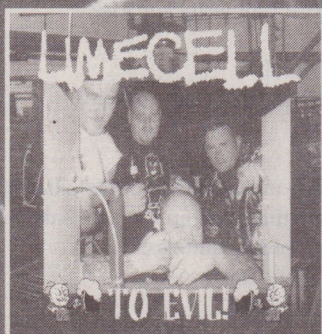
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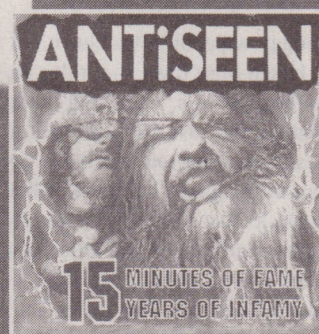
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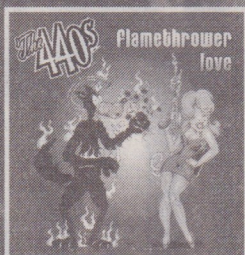
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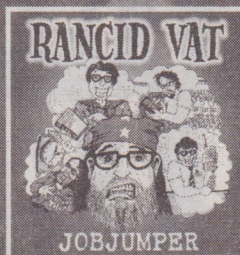
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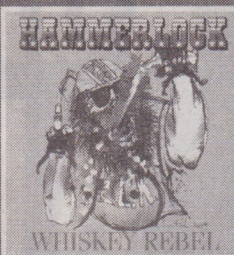
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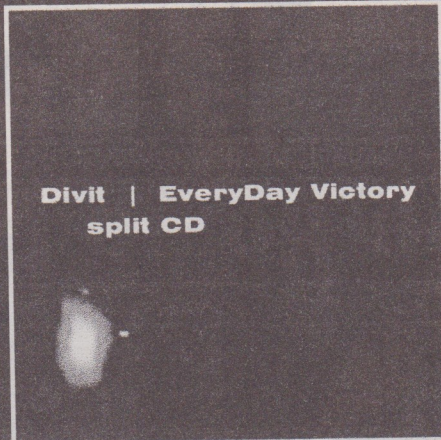
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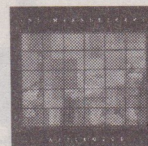
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IT'S PROBABLY GOOD THAT CHRIS IS THROTTLING THIS GUY INSTEAD OF THE BASSIST FROM ENEMY YOU: Because, well, then he'd be choking the Chicken. Then again, "Throttling the Rod" sounds vaguely risqué, as well...

PROPAGANDHI

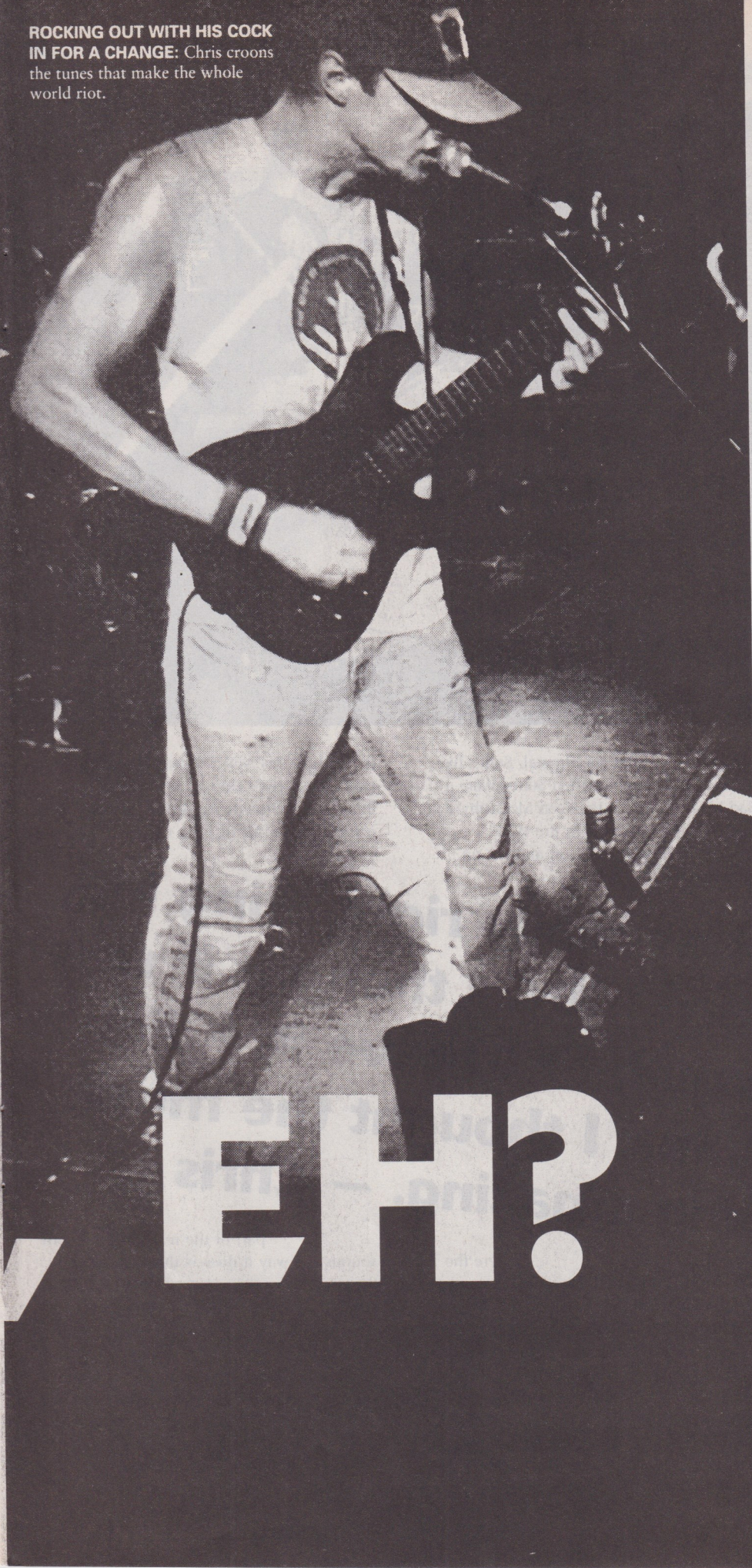
NEW ALBUM, NEW BASSIST,

BEAUTY

Words by Dave Johnson

Pictures courtesy of Fat Wreck Chords

**ROCKING OUT WITH HIS COCK
IN FOR A CHANGE:** Chris croons
the tunes that make the whole
world riot.



1 995. I was nineteen years old, had long hair, and loved Black Flag, Minor Threat, Fugazi, Gorilla Biscuits, Bad Religion and the Descendents after coming off a Metal binge in my early-to-mid teens. I finished my first year of college and went down to San Diego to visit a friend. Her roommate had a CD by a band I'd heard of, but not listened to — Propgandhi. The CD was *How To Clean Everything*. I popped it in the player and immediately enjoyed their upbeat brand of Fat Wreck-ish pop-thrash. When I got back up North, I picked up the CD and listened to it, along with BR's *Suffer* record all summer while working at a camera store in Richmond, CA, (a bit north of Berkeley) and working nights as a summer camp counselor.

A friend invited me to their show at Gilman Street that June. I'd never been to Gilman before; I'd been without a car for some of my freshman year, and although I knew *about* Gilman, had never ventured over the hill to check it out. We went for a chicken sandwich at Jack in the Box before the show. I think the Yah-Mos, a band I used to see all the time in Sacramento opened. FYP played as well. Then Propagandhi came on. What I saw that night was pure, unadulterated Punk. The show eventually went down in history as one of the legendary events at Gilman — not quite as hallowed as Operation Ivy's last show, but definitely one for the record books.


Why?

Having pieced it together in retrospect, the East Bay was pissed. Their precious Jawbreakers, Samiams and Green Days had all been snatched up by major labels. Rancid was in talks to sign with Epic. Combine the long-time punks who'd come to regard Gilman as a second home and the bro contingent who rolled over from Concord, Danville and Lafayette to fuckin' *mosh*, dude, and you've already got a recipe for tension at the shows.

Then add in a crew of preachy, angry, naked Canadians who refuse to play their catchiest songs and stick drumsticks up their asses, cops at the door, a singer who walks out into the audience talking shit about America and interviewing the dopiest-looking gutter-punks he can find, and you have a recipe for disaster.

I couldn't believe Chris Hannah's *cojones* as he stood there, Ibanez Metal Guy guitar in hand, no shirt, no pants, some guy's snot dripping from his nose, pointing at the fucker who spit on him yelling, "Fuck off, eh?!"

Drummer Jordan Samolesky, aka Jord, remembers, "I was crouching behind my drums, thinking the crowd was gonna rush the stage at any moment, just hoping Chris



MANTAS, CRONOS AND ABBADDON: Er, I mean, Chris, Todd and Jord bash out some black metal for those white Canadian winters.

wouldn't piss them off too badly."

A friend of mine who's seen a million shows at the venue said, "I have *never* watched a crowd leave a show at Gilman so divided. Half of them were like 'Yeah! Right on! The other half were like, 'Dude...fuck those guys!'" Personally, I was just

right to the edge of speedmetal. Songs like "...And We Thought Nation-States Were a Bad Idea," "I Was a Pre-Teen McCarthyist" and "Nailing Descartes to the Wall" whacked you over the head and left no question as to

doing that, this NOFX record comes out and we're like, "Holy shit! Someone's already done that!" [Note to Fat Mike: I think Chris just called you Metal.] But then,

I was actually this really right-wing kid, but when I heard MDC I thought it was just great — I couldn't believe it. I didn't get the lyrics, but I thought the music was fucking amazing. — Chris

blown away by the spectacle of it all.

Broadsides, Manifestos and Mantas

A year later, the band released *Less Talk, More Rock* and things began to make a little more sense. It was harder-edged, cranked up

where the band stood on issues. They most certainly were *not* just another NOFX soundalike, thank you very much.

Chris credits the sound of *How To Clean Everything* to a certain Canadian band in particular: "I think it was the Dayglo Abortions. They were really melodic. That, plus Bad Religion — the *Suffer* record — it was like, 'Holy shit — if we combined metal and this.' And then after we started

part of the reason that record sounds the way it does is that we went to the same place those records were recorded [Westbeach] and used their equipment.

Less Talk... in comparison, really began to reveal their true nature as kindred spirits of mine — kids from the middle of nowhere (or a place that may well have been the middle of nowhere) who got into metal and then somehow discovered the life-changing power of punk rock. For me, the town was Sacramento. For Chris and Jord, it was

Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, home of the World's Largest Coke Can. So what transforms a suburban (or small-town prairie) kid with a penchant for Dungeons and Dragons and military aircraft into a freedom-fighting, guitar-wielding, alcoholic warrior for justice? Jord: "Me and him [Chris] lived in a shit town and took a bus into the big city of Winnipeg and went to a record store looking for metal. We bought a record by the Dayglo Abortions."

Chris adds, "I thought it was a great bargain — 25 songs on one record! And the song titles were just *hilarious*."

We were sitting in the mall reading the lyrics and laughing. Actually, the same day, I bought the Sudden Impact record, thinking they were a metal band!" As misfit teenagers, a lot of kids get into metal because it's loud, aggressive and is guaranteed to piss their Jim Croce-loving elders off. A lot of punk kids in their mid-twenties to early thirties went through a metal phase before they discovered punk; it was something that had to be sought out — either in a record store in Winnipeg, at an Op Ivy show your punk-loving boyfriend took you to, in a cool older sister's record collection, or on a mix tape in a friend's living room. Green Day wasn't on MTV yet. Nobody was online. The Warped Tour hadn't started. There's now a whole age-group of kids who weren't metal before they were punk because punk was right there for them. But for those of us who suckled at Metal's beastly teat, what prompts that transition from Metallica to MDC? As Chris notes, "I don't know — why was I so intense about playing Dungeons & Dragons when I was a kid? I was actually this really right-wing kid, but when I heard MDC I thought it was just great — I couldn't believe it. I didn't get the lyrics, but I thought the music was fucking amazing."

Jord: "High school's just such a fucked-up time for everybody. And mainstream music was just full of shit — I couldn't stand it at all. After getting out of high school and listening to a lot more political bands, I started getting a lot more interested in lyrical content. "Why are they pissed off and singing about certain stuff?" and it had kind of a snowball effect — *all* I listened to for quite awhile was political punk bands."

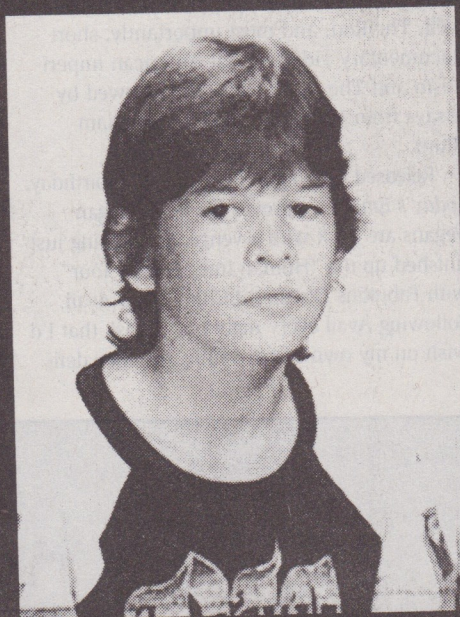
"Yeah, because it was a *heyday* when we actually started to listen to that stuff — C.O.C., Dead Kennedys, MDC..."

"It seemed like all the bands around at that time had some kind of political content; well except for the jokey kinds of punk bands, which I think of in kind of a separate category."

"It didn't seem like one kind of *scene* at all...All these different personalities. Like,

there's no comparison between MDC, The Exploited and GBH, you know?"

Propagandhi asserted their distinct personality on *Less Talk...*, filling the liner notes with manifestoes on animal rights, women's rights, gay rights, religion and other topics regarding radical activism, not to mention contact information for a variety of radical organizations, prompting graphic artist John Yates to quip, "They should have called it *Less Art, More Text*. Chris notes, "Looking back on *Less Talk...*, I don't regret it and I don't not believe anything that we wrote on there. If anything, I believe it more. But at the time, it was about the presentation. And at the time, that presentation was to make sure people knew what we were about with no misunderstanding. But today, still believing the same things, I think we serve it up



THE LAST IN A LINE of bassists that featured The Weakerthans' John K. Samson, Todd Kowalski proves he was backing the Man on the Silver Mountain way back in the day.

with a little more of the flavor of the first record. Like the Gilman show you saw — I *think* it affected you in a positive way; depends on who's judging, I suppose. But then, how many people in the crowd were like "Fuck this! I'm not interested in this message if they're gonna be like that." But *Less Talk...* is out. It's out as it is. If you want that version of that message, there it is. But it's really not *us* as people. I can see someone looking at that record and thinking, "Do these guys walk around the streets with placards all day protesting stuff?" It gets to the point where it makes the message seem unreal." And in a sense — scratch that — in *every* sense, *Less Talk, More Rock* was a confrontational record; a statement against insipid pop-punk and the vacuous skate-rock they'd been lumped in

with previously. Fusing their metal chops with punk activism and melody, Propagandhi made a crossover record for the nineties; essentially reversing and what bands like C.O.C. and D.R.I. had done in the eighties.

Post *Less Talk...*, bassist John Samson left the band to start the Weakerthans, a much less raucous, more personal outfit. The search for the Golden One, the Chosen Lord of the Thunderbroom, one who more-than-nicely fills a stars 'n' stripes Speedo, was on. Found in the person of one Todd Kowalski, known commonly as "The Rod" — who'd formerly played in I Spy. Says Chris, "[John's] doing what he should've been doing all along, and now we're doing what we should've been doing all along. [On the new record], you can see what was missing for both parties. He's a different guy; the three of us [meaning the current line-up] all have similar backgrounds growing up. And you can't put two guys who love speedmetal and hardcore together in a band [with someone like John] — well, I *guess* you can; we did — but you can't keep it going forever. Eventually somebody's gonna want to do something that the other doesn't wanna do. So it's easier this way."

Missing: Canadian Anarcho-Vegan Nutters.

Other than an appearance on a couple of AK Press and Fat Wreck comps and an odds 'n' sods compilation (*Where Quantity is Job 1*) on Chris and Jord's G-7 Welcoming Committee label, not much was heard from the skids for four years. Their last SF date was in '96. (In case you were wondering, the "Dallas Hansen Dance Mix" version of "The Only Good Fascist is a Very Dead Fascist" released during this interim period features the answering-machine stylings of one Dallas Hansen, a Winnipeg local who'd heard some story about Chris bashing some Nazi with a mic stand. It wasn't a Propagandhi show, and it wasn't a mic stand. Chris merely told the guy to fuck off because he was tangling with a friend. Suddenly this became Chris bashing Nazis on the head. Chris thought the whole thing was hilarious, and also thinks that Hansen makes some good points in his rant, so they just decided to bookend the song with it.)

So where'd they go? Nowhere, really. They've been holed up in Winnipeg making a go of G-7, releasing records by Consolidated, The Weakerthans and The (International) Noise Conspiracy, among others, as Chris notes, "Somebody was complaining on the Propagandhi message board, 'You guys are musty lazy asses for not

putting out a record for four years!' Then some other kid pointed out, well, actually, Jord and Chris have put out *twelve* on G-7. It's not like we haven't been doing anything. But also, we really didn't get down to making the record — *really* start doing it — until about a year and a half or two years ago. Plus, who cares? If people can wait fourteen years for *The Phantom Menace* they can wait four years for a Propagandhi album, y'know? It's just not *that* important. We had to become a *band*, too. Like, we didn't just want to get someone to play bass." When asked how long it was between John's departure and Todd's arrival, he laughs, "We had Todd before John left, but he didn't know it at the time."

Less Wait, More Thrash

Brett Matthews once pointed out that "Before, on Propagandhi records, the songs sung by the bass player were the wussiest tracks, now they're the angriest!" And it's true — The Rod's got a massive growl and a thundering low end that seems worlds removed from *How To Clean Everything's* skater-friendly sound. The poppiest track on the freshly-released *Today's Empires*, *Tomorrow's Ashes*, "Back to the Motor League" still roars with might, anger, and a

strong dose of rightously pissed-off, yet self-effacing humor. Harkening back to the first flyer they put up looking for a bassist billing themselves as "Progressive Thrash", the album is indeed just that. Not "progressive" in the sense that they're biting Alex Lifeson guitar lines or tossing in some weird-ass Bill Bruford thing, but progressive thrash in that incredibly well-played, pissed off punk-metal doesn't have to come off as a lame rehash of the eighties. Then, of course, there's the political element to it as well.

The skids pulled out all the stops in packaging the record — Lawrence Ferlinghetti artwork on the outside, full color booklet inside, and perhaps, most interestingly, the CD is interactive. Pop it into your computer and with a click of the mouse, you've got band bios, a bit of live footage, Jord prancing around in his undies, The Rod showing off, well, The Rod, and most importantly, short documentary videos about American imperialism and The Black Panthers, followed by essays from Ward Churchill and William Blum.

Released on Ronald Reagan's 90th birthday, *Today's Empires...* proves the Winnipegian Vegans are back with a vengeance, having just finished up the "Human Intervention Tour" with Fabulous Disaster, J Church and Avail. Following Avail every night isn't a task that I'd wish on my own worst enemy, but they defi-

nately proved up to the task. The main surprise about the new live show is that they've actually gone back and started playing some of the older material — including "Anti-Manifesto", "Haille Sallasse, Up Your Ass" and even "Ska Sucks", a song they once hated so much they'd been known to get mad at people who called out for it. Chris explains, "Well, we're trying to expand the circle of friends instead of expanding the circle of enemies. If one kid hears one of those old songs and picks up a book because of it, that's a great thing."

While no less resolute in their ideals, Chris, Jord and Todd seem to have realized that discourse is a positive thing; maybe they already knew that, but it comes across much more now than it did during the *Less Talk...* period, even as the music's harder and more brutal than ever. And if you see them at a show, don't be scared. They're actually the nicest people you'll ever meet. I remember at that fateful Gilman show six years ago, Chris said something at the end of the set that night — "I feel like tonight has been completely counterproductive." I can't say I necessarily agree with him. Remember that Jack in the Box chicken sandwich? It's the last one I ever ate. +

For more information on Propagandhi and G-7 Welcoming Committee Records, check out the G-7 webpage at www.welcomingcommittee.com



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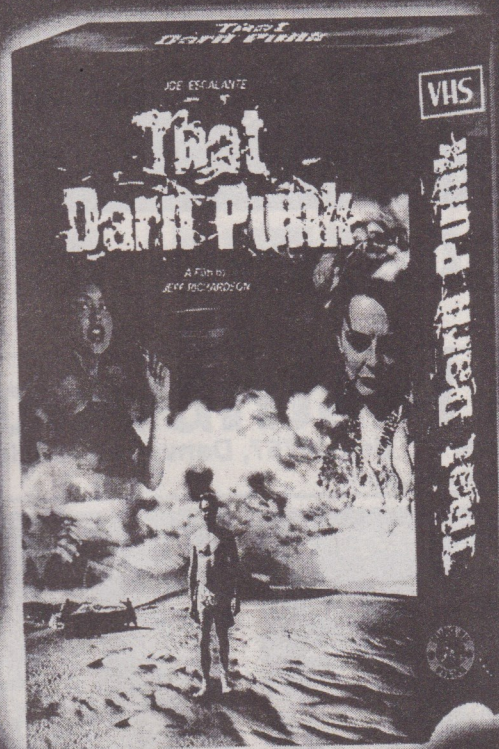
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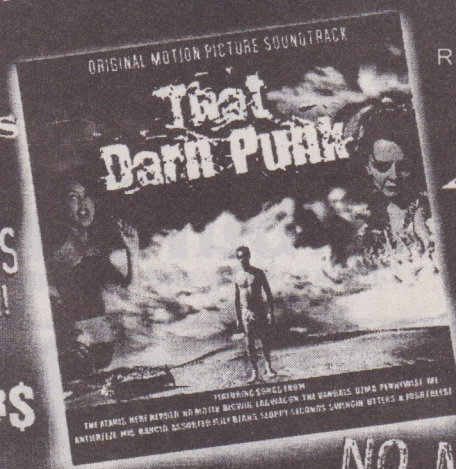
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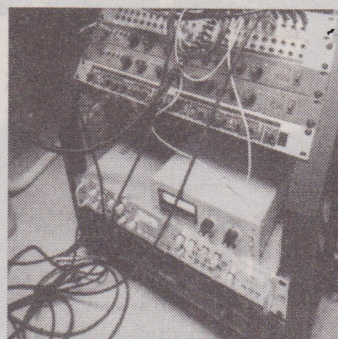
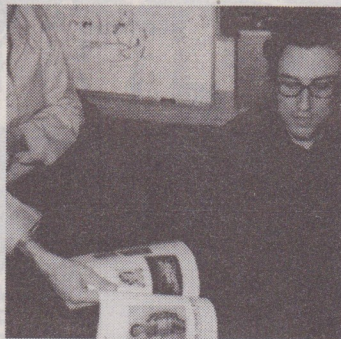
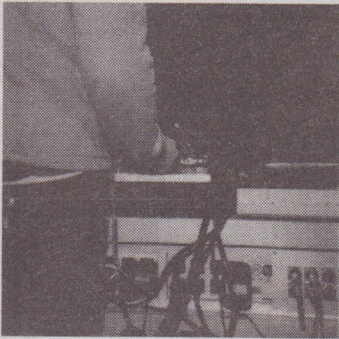
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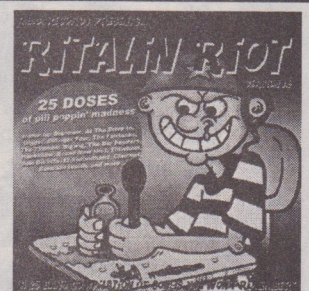
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1. Position of a punk, over 40, 24,000 feet over Italy, which reminds me of Florida.

So it's the new millennium. I'm flying high above the brown hills of Tuscany. From this perspective the medieval geography of Italy is perfectly evident. The villages cluster like red-tiled sores against the countryside; the fields radiate around them; narrow roads bisect the commons, connecting isolated hamlets. The geography hasn't substantially changed in a thousand years, and a thousand years from now it may well look more or less the same.

I hope not. I can't imagine anything more boring than being stuck in some backwater town that hasn't changed in generations, even if it is picturesque...Strike that: I CAN imagine it. I lived it. I grew in a sweltering, mosquito-infested swamp called Pensacola, Florida, where damn little ever happened and where life was stuck in a time-warp out of 1950's sitcoms. So my heart goes out to those kids stuck down there in Tuscany glued to their radios in a vain attempt to connect to the larger world. Living somewhere where things never change means you and your life don't make a whole lot of difference.

Geography isolates. But time isolates too, and history, and one's attitude towards history. When some old codger with a self-satisfied smirk declares, "The more things change, the more they stay the same," he's not articulating some objective statement about the passage of time, he's invalidating your existence, dragging you down the same nihilistic hole that most conservatism eventually sinks into. He's saying: "I didn't make a difference, and neither will you." Take that attitude and give it a geographic center and you have some Tuscan hill town, or Pensacola, Florida, good for the tourists because it hasn't changed much, but not much good for anything else. Take that attitude and extend it out and you've got Tuscany, or Florida, or the future of the United States of god-damned America, where the more things change the more a lousy sameness seems to grip.

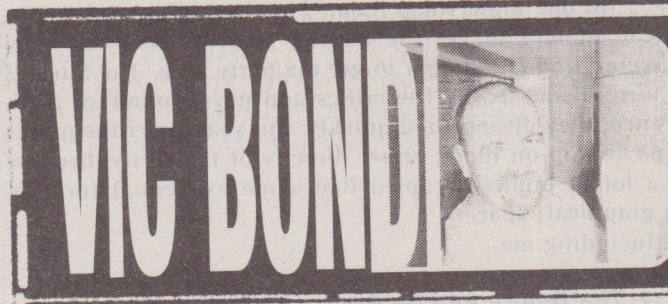
We've got a new president. He's a lot like his dad, and a lot like Reagan, the first person I never voted for.

Ah, progress.

2. Time-tripping with Iggy and the Stooges

I've been listening to Napster a lot lately, first because it's an amazing app, likely to revolutionize computing, and second because there's a lot of good music available on it (but surprisingly little hardcore-you guys should get busy and rip more of your discs). It's fantastic at helping you score obscure songs without having to scour the record shops. If the record companies weren't such greedheads (see Jeff Alexander's article in the December 2000 *Hit List*) they'd realize Napster and peer-to-peer services like it are great ways to amortize their back catalogs (especially since, when you buy these records in old record stores, the companies and artists never see a dime anyway). If they were smart, they'd work with Napster to develop a reasonable subscription service based on the technology, rather than trying to kill the company. But, of course, they are blockheads.

At least the people using Napster have better sense. I've been reacquainting myself with Iggy and the Stooges, courtesy of Napster. I wasn't going to discuss them this issue—I was going to focus on some of the newer bands I like, such as Scissorfight, At the Drive In and International Noise Conspiracy, but I downloaded this version of "Search and Destroy" and it just floored me. Whoever ripped it, fucked it up completely. It's badly distorted and the guitars are totally overdriven. But it works, maybe better than the cleaner original. It has a total sonic ROAR—the guitars like doom and Iggy the herald of the apocalypse. The Stooges released the song in 1973, right as the last US troops left 'Nam, and the record sounds like all the hectic waste that war embodied. I could never figure out when Iggy sang "Look out baby, cause I'm using technology/Ain't got time to make no apology" whether he was singing about



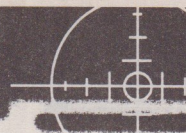
guns or guitars, killing or rocking. Probably both, which is why in my mind that record has always been connected to that moment.

Thing is, I wasn't a Stooges fan at the time. At the time I was living in the wretched bayou of Pensacola, out of touch with rock, and thinking Iggy was something you spat up during a cold. That's isolation for you. Later, after I discovered punk and moved to the civilized world, I used to hear the Stooges at parties, but I was never much of a fan until I saw Iggy solo in 1979 and discovered his amazing shimmy. But I never saw the Stooges, and going back over their records now makes me realize how much I missed.

"Nineteen Sixty-nine", the first track on the first Stooges album, really got my attention. It's an awesome way to start a music career. A funky wah wah pedal breaks into a white-trash groove, and we're off:

It's 1969, okay
All across the USA
It's another year for me and you
Another year with nothing to do
It's another year for me and you
Another year with nothing to do

Pretty much the national anthem of the bored, and you had to work hard to be bored in 1969. There was a lot going on. The war was ripping the country apart, and Nixon was in the White House. Woodstock was in 1969, as was Altamont. To be bored in 1969 meant you were either from some insignificant shitville, or lived in the psychic equivalent of shitville,



dialled into your own obliteration. To put together a rock band and sing about it was a form of social protest, but no one recognized it at the time. Social protest then meant songs with lyrics about the war or racial injustice. Problem was, that mode of political songwriting, of pop music, had just about played itself out. Rock music didn't appear to make that much of a difference. For all the social protest, for all the political activism, Nixon was in and American involvement in Vietnam would drag out for another four years. So singer-songwriters turned from Dylanesque anthems to moping ballads about their relationships, and rock music in general turned from activism to entertainment. In the 1970s, Rock lost the connection to the moment that made it vital and interesting. But there were the Stooges, putting that connection first and foremost: "1969" (and then later, on *Funhouse*, "1970"). They were saying: *We're here, mutha-fuckers. Deal with it.*

No one understood them. They weren't overtly political enough to get the college student fans, and they weren't banal enough to get the party kids. The Stooges were dismissed by the critics and never found an audience; they disappeared quickly. But years later the punks picked up on them, either directly or indirectly, because a lot of punks occupied that same existential (or geographical) space. Including me.

3. The Public and Its Problems.

During his lifetime, John Dewey experienced the greatest single compression of space and time in human history. He lived long -from 1859 to 1952-and witnessed the closing of the American frontier, the last great continental and polar explorations, and the media connection of the world via telegraph, cable, radio, movies and television. The geographic scale of life moved from isolated to interrelated. When John Dewey was born, most people grew their own food, made their own products; when he died, wheat grown in Australia was baked into loaves in New York; and clothing made in India was tailored in Hong Kong. When he was born, few people ventured ten miles beyond their birthplaces; by his death, millions had moved across oceans following new paths of immigration and the winds of two world wars. When he was born, the electric light and jazz hadn't been invented; when he died they were found in every corner of the globe. Burlington, Vermont, the small town he grew up in, became connected to the world. And Dewey became Burlington's most famous native son.

He is arguably the greatest philosopher in American history. He was hailed as an innovator in psychology; a great educational reformer, and a champion of democracy and equal rights. His collected works, over 30 volumes worth, address almost every significant dispute in philosophy, psychology and political theory. Along with William James, he developed the formal philosophical system, Pragmatism, which revolutionized twentieth-century philosophy. His best books, *Democracy and Education* (1961), *Reconstruction in*

Philosophy (1920), and *Freedom and Culture* (1931), reward the reader many times over. And although somewhat obscure today, in his time he was also a public figure on a par with Edison and Einstein. People wanted to know what professor Dewey thought about things.

He became famous in part because he was the first formally trained philosopher to recognize the consequences of the changes of his age for our concept of human nature. In his time there were basically two concepts of human nature. The first held that human nature was innate and fixed, a mystic inheritance from God. It was a theological notion: some people were born good, and others bad, and not a whole lot in experience-or in history-did much to change that. The other, opposite position, maintained that human nature was whatever it was conditioned to be; people were blank slates, made good or bad by experience, by the moment, by history. Rather than argue one side or the other, Dewey did something less obvious: he developed a wholly unique argument.

Dewey began his career as a psychologist, and from his laboratory experiments concluded that there were constants in human nature, but those constants were not fixed quantities, such as good or evil, but processes, such as the capacity to learn, habitual practice, and the ability to adapt. And what those mental processes focused on, the objects of their attention, mattered every bit as much as the processes themselves. That meant that while human nature was fixed, at least in the innate capacities of people, what it was fixed on mattered just as much and impressed itself on human nature as strongly as did one's instincts. To Dewey it made no sense to argue, as did many of his contemporaries, that human nature hadn't changed since the days of Rome; while Romans loved, what they loved was different than what people in the age of radio and movies loved. The moment made all the difference.

To Dewey, the more things changed, the more human nature changed. Dewey's goal was to have humans understand the process of change in order to direct it towards conscious goals, rather than have people lurch from one historical catastrophe to another. To him, one of the precipitating causes of wars and other catastrophes was the obstinate insistence by some intellectuals that human nature couldn't be changed; that human nature was fixed. The fascists argued this in the 20s and 30s, maintaining steadfastly that human beings were born for domination by the strong just as they had been in the days of Rome; Dewey saw in this argument the birth of the later war.

Dewey's vision of the fluidity of human nature underlay his politics. A lifelong democrat (with a small "d"), he believed that only the institutions of democracy and education had the flexibility and adaptability necessary to enable people to gain a conscious hold over their history and progress. An informed democracy could direct human needs towards positive ends.

Dewey was a utopian in the sense that he was optimistic-even during both world wars-about the ability of human beings to solve their problems and build a better future. And he was utopian in the old-fashioned American sense of believing that America was a land where the improbable became possible, and where the worst evils of the human spirit-what Dewey called the "unregenerate Adam"-could be reformed and put to good ends. But he was not utopian about the ease

with which that evil could be reformed, and he could sometimes be frighteningly prescient about the fragility of democracy in the modern world, especially in his short 1927 book, *The Public and Its Problems*.

The book was an attempt to come to grips with a political mistake. Dewey had backed American entry into WWI and lived to regret it. He had believed the Wilsonian rhetoric about a war for democracy and assumed that American involvement in the war would jump-start a host of progressive causes he supported. Instead the war ended the Progressive movement and ushered in a period of reaction, of intolerance, immigration restriction, prohibition, and businessmen's government.

Dewey figured he had made two interconnected mistakes. First, he underestimated the extent to which economic self-interest would deform and corrupt the political process. Second, Dewey underestimated the capacity of the media to influence public opinion. Dewey assumed that the centralization of power that would take place during the war would give the progressives in Wilson's government the ability to regulate and reform child labor, unsafe working conditions, low wages, and the worst excesses of business in America. They did, to some extent. But the war also transferred massive amounts of wealth from taxpayers to private businessmen, and those same businessmen used that wealth after the war to launch political campaigns that overthrew the very reforms Dewey had advocated. The role of the media was key. During the 1920s broadcast radio swept across the United States. Dewey felt that radio, new mass magazines such as *Time*, and large circulation newspapers instilled a set of attitudes among the public that worked against their long-term interests. The media valorized the entrepreneur and denigrated the community, championed the middle-class WASP over the working class immigrant, and promoted eugenics and creationism over real science. Democratic theory assumed that the individual needed good information to make informed political decisions; Dewey was the first to point out how difficult it is to get good information when that information is controlled by wealthy businessmen who twist the news to reflect their own perspectives:

The smoothest road to control of political conduct is by control of opinion. As long as interests of pecuniary profit are powerful, and a public has not located and identified itself, those who have this interest will have an unresisted motive for tampering with the springs of political action in all that affects them.

Dewey was no conspiracy theorist. He did not assume that media magnates like Henry Luce and William Randolph Hearst worked together to shape public opinion in the interests of conservatives. But Dewey did point out that Luce and Hearst were united by a common effort to make money in the media business, and this motive inevitably led them to prefer entertaining the public to informing them. The outcome was a public enthralled by the superficial and the sensational, and unable to clearly reason about its common interests. Luce and Hearst weren't propagandists per se, but they created a culture in which propaganda could work effectively:

There is a social pathology which works powerfully against effective inquiry into social institutions and conditions. It manifests itself in a thousand ways; in querulousness, in impotent drifting, in uneasy snatching at distractions,

VICBONDI

in idealization of the long established, in a facile optimism assumed as a cloak, in riotous glorification of things "as they are," in intimidation of all dissenters—ways which depress and dissipate thought all the more effectively because they operate with subtle and unconscious pervasiveness.

Dewey's sad conclusion—which he could never quite bring himself to embrace fully—was that the public could not solve its own problems because it was too busy being entertained—and he offered this conclusion years before talking movies, network television, the Internet, and coordinated marketing strategies.

On the occasion of this new millennium, one wonders what a mind as incisive as Dewey's might have thought about the merger of Luce's bastard progeny, Time Warner, with AOL, to form the greatest capitalist media empire in the history of the world.

...Especially given the public problems of our time.

4. Why emocore sucks.

I suppose I have to respond to Dave Johnson's teary defense of Bay Area punk in the December 2000 issue of *HL*. Recall that Dave had recommended American Steel to me, and waxed so effusive about Jawbreaker that I gave them a second listen.

And came to the conclusion they were crap.

Which Dave, for some reason, took offense to. But hey, everyone's entitled to an opinion, even if they're wrong. Suffice it to say that Dave felt-ZING—that he got the best of me in this dispute because Jawbreaker and Pegboy were contemporaries, and therefore Jawbreaker couldn't be imitating an older band. Except that-ZING-I never said Pegboy was older, I said they were *original*, meaning imaginative, creative and unique. Something that Jawbreaker is not, whatever the time frame. Then-ZING-Dave tweaks me by pointing out the diverse records Epitaph has put out, after I said that they issued nothing but junk. Except that-ZING-the only reason I blathered on about Max Weber in that column was to point out how ruthless bureaucratization is, and how much to pattern Epitaph fits that model. If that's too complex for you, let me spell it out: just because Epitaph did a distribution deal with a great record label (Burning Heart, home of the Refused), doesn't mean that the majority of their back catalog isn't permeated with the rich aroma of cowshit.

Okay. So now that we're all on the same page, let me get to the real point: emocore sucks. Granted, I'm as guilty of emocore as anyone, having helped spawn this particular monstrosity way back in 1981. So allow me to completely disavow it: a big problem with punk rock today is that too many of you have been suckling on the breast of weepy power ballads about bad girlfriends and mean daddies. All of which amounts to absolutely zero. Get real: your personal problems aren't so striking that anyone should pay money to listen to you bitch about them (Yes, that means Jawbreaker and Jets from Brazil). What all of this sonic group therapy is really about is your belief that being *earnest* and *honest* about your feelings will get you some existential reward, most likely laid. So cut it out. We all know life is hard.



Punk rock has gone down the rathole with emocore. Since we here at *Hit List* have already taken a stand against mindless Political Correctness in Punk Rock, allow me to raise the banner against the confessional, my-life-in-middle-class-Orange-County-is-oh-so-troubled style of hardcore. It's horrible music, barely one step removed from the muling soap operas of Fleetwood Mac and Jim Croce. The more you indulge in this witless blather, the more your mind softens like salt water taffy in the San Diego sunshine. Only endless assaults by Jawbreaker could have ruined Dave's ability to construct a lucid argument, and led him to the truly bizarre parts of his column, wherein he tears up and slobbers about the man I used to be as opposed to the man I am now (yo bro, I ain't tracked a song in three years, so stop living in the past, already), and then sputters through a painful metaphor about how I helped build the house of Punk Rock so that guys his age could squat on my lawn. Then he has me rocking with my Winchester (uh, that would be a shotgun, Dave) on the porch of Punk Rock and yelling "Get off my lawn!" He continues:

We're on your lawn and we're staying for awhile. Some of us will leave. Some of us will die and be buried right there. Some of us will yank a piece of turf out of the ground, carefully place it in our pockets and plant it somewhere else.

Jesus, you damn emokids couldn't have gotten me more wrong if you tried. Yes, sunshine boy, get off the fucking lawn. But don't leave and go crying to your mommies. Get off your lazy asses and into the house of Punk Rock and TEAR IT THE HELL DOWN. That's all I've ever wanted. You'd make yer grandpappy so proud.

5. What John Dewey and Iggy Pop have in common.

I've been on this jihad against lame punk rock for so long that you'd think I wouldn't need to get so nasty about it. Don't take it personal. Maybe the problem is that I bitch so much about what's wrong with punk that I never take a stand for what's right about it. So here goes:

It got me out of Pensacola.

Before punk (and more generally rock), I had bought a first-class ticket to becoming the man you love to hate (even more than now). I was such the dickless wankoff that I went to Boy's State and won an award from the goddamned American Legion for good citizenship. We're talking conservative here, kids: I used to go over to my best friend's house and for fun we'd watch the cockpit films his old man shot when he was bombing villages in 'Nam. Best in my class, captain of the soccer team, on my way Naval Academy, I stopped to pick up my award for Most Likely to Succeed and got mugged by the Ramones. And didn't go to the Academy, and didn't become any kind of success that they would recognize in the abortion clinic bombing capital of the world,

Pensacola, Florida.

I'm never going back. Because Punk got the word to me, there in the god-benighted hellwaters of the Deep South. Punk was the one thing that smashed through 17 years of ruthless political indoctrination and helped me find my way out of my geographic and existential shithole. And punk introduced me to all the good things in life, such as sex and booze and drugs and art and half-cocked absolutist assertions of the truth. I've got a little girl now and there's no way that I want her to indulge in those joys with quite the same excessive zeal. But there's also no way that I want her to grow up to be the type of person comfortable in a place where nothing ever changes, or rest comfortable with the received wisdom of common opinion. That's punk.

And that's why we need punk. Because Pensacola Florida (and much of the South) is still a cesspool of reaction, of relentless conservative nihilism built around the premise that human nature is the same as it was in the days of Rome, all bad, and that one life doesn't make a damn bit of difference in the great cosmic *Sturm und Drang* of Empires. If not for punk, I would have bought into that bullshit and would probably have gotten my ass fragged in Lebanon or Panama. Or would be suffering now from Agent Orange (as my friend's father is) or Gulf War syndrome (as my cousin's husband is). Punk taught me this: the only time your military or your country cares about you is when you die for it.

We need more instruction like *that*. We need it because despite the fact that the country *has* changed in the past thirty years, despite the fact that we *are* different than our fathers and grandfathers, there's a cabal of evil, twisted sons-of-bitches out there determined to deny the difference and assert a status quo that benefits *them*. It isn't that things don't change; it's that there is a definite group of people determined to hold back change at all costs. The same pencil-dicked bastards that were corrupting all the best things about rich, utopian American dreaming in 1969 are still at it. The number of conservative political figures calling the shots today who cut their teeth under Nixon is astonishing: George Bush (the elder), Antonin Scalia, William Rehnquist, Pat Buchanan, Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld. The Nixon administration united these men in the belief that the United States was threatened by civil libertarians, peaceniks, drug fiends and cultural radicals. They made it their crusade to eliminate them. "This country is turning so far to the right you won't recognized it," Attorney General turned felon John Mitchell told a reporter in 1970. When they couldn't do it with outright abuse of power, they hired an actor to tell people he was one of them even as he broke the unions and redistributed wealth up the socio-economic scale. But even Reagan couldn't keep the country from becoming more tolerant and equalitarian. Hence the culture wars, and the return of the Nixonians to power.

I offer this much too brief review of the sad decline of public life in the interests of bringing you punks back to the original moment for me and hardcore. Plenty of my contemporaries would dispute me, but I don't think you can disconnect the birth of hardcore from the election of Reagan. Hardcore punk was pretty much the only cultural movement of the time to bullshit the scam populism of Reagan-and to damn both it

and mindless hippie apologetics at the same time. Hardcore was a radical style of music to match a radical cultural moment. That's what made it great.

In a letter to me Dave made what I thought was the best criticism of my put-down of the Bay Area scene. He argued that taste in music is necessarily subjective, and conditioned more by one's surroundings and moment than by any innate qualities in the music. The difference between 1981 punks and later generations, he argued, was their proximity to the original scene; he didn't have one, and focused on the records instead, and accordingly emocore bands like Jawbreaker appealed more to him than other records. It's a great point, except that in 1981 we didn't have a scene either. We created one. Sure, we were imitating the best stuff we could find from the 1960s and 1970s. But we were trying to do it in a way that avoided the obvious. Like Iggy did: being political didn't just mean Dylanesque ballads; it could be a full-on scream about wanting things that were free.

John Dewey avoided the obvious in political thought. He could have easily seen the corporate control of information that was developing in his time as some type of capitalist conspiracy. Plenty of his contemporaries did. He did something more subtle—he pointed out an ethos common to the business of his day that corrupted (and continues to corrupt) public consciousness and responsibility. You can approach the politics of the new administration in much the same way: while

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there are plenty of financial ties that bind new Nixonians, fundamentally it's a shared antipathy toward everything you care about that unites them. And this, which is the mark of their new sophistication (which they learned from Clinton): they will never assault your future or your values directly. They'll work in subtle ways, through the culture, resetting the public dialog so that one day the public will say, yes, brown skies aren't so bad, and yes, we do need to imprison even more of our population to keep the public safe, and yes, we need to tax the Internet and shut down all those freelance sites. Pat Buchanan was right: It is a culture war.

In 1981 punk rock was the only sector of the culture that looked at

Reagan and saw a dunce who talked out of both sides of his mouth; that took sheer joy in pointing out the hypocrisies of the day; that waged war on the slick manipulation of public opinion and the sheep-minded conformity of the majority. There were a lot of other things going on in punk then, but that was the heart of it. It made the scene.

A lot like today. So you guys don't have any excuses anymore. Fuck emocore. Get out there and fight. +

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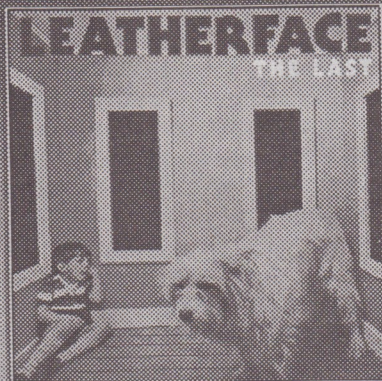
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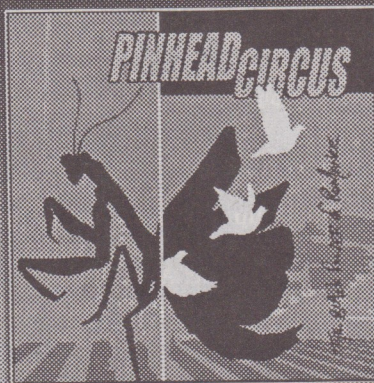
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Every so often, a band comes along that just shakes everything up. Something that just strikes all the right chords, and makes you say, "I want more!" listen after listen. Get ready to get shaken up, people! The Pattern are a new band. I mean really new. They started about 6 months ago in Oakland, Ca. But since this brief time have made serious headway in the Bay Area and across the West Coast. Already packing 'em in and known for a raw, tight and almost disco-esque live show The Pattern can wrap you in up in their awesome hooks or their live volume.

Interview by: Steve Newsome (Less Tar Magazine)

Interview with Chris (vocals) and Andy (2nd guitar/vocals).

Steve: So I got the chance to see you guys at the Tip Top Club in San Francisco, a few months back. It was quite a spectacle, you have a serious light show going on. What's up with that? I really want people right away to know how awesome and raw The Pattern is as a live band.

Andy: Yes, lights and fog... that's what the kids want these days. We didn't invent anything, we're just fulfilling the overwhelming demand for nauseating, blinding lights and acrid, choking fog... epileptics should stay to the rear of the hall.

Christopher: We dig the idea of bringing an idea usually associated with big concerts into small places and basements. But also to do it in a way that isn't annoying or showy at the expense of intimacy.

Steve: You guys have a blend of '60's pop, straight up American rock & roll, with some kinda raw almost trippy thing in your music. A lot of bands right now, are shooting for some rock stuff, but have no fucking melody or real sense of structure, but The Pattern really stands out having melody and great hooks. How did you come up with your sound?

Christopher: It wasn't a prefab idea. When we were first getting together we talked about what we liked and what would be good. Jason had some songs on guitar and we went to work on them and our sound is where we arrived. I know its original because it reflects our personalities.

Steve: I mean you guys have guitar solos!

Andy: Yeah, Elvis, the Kinks, they all had guitar solos. You're supposed to have guitar solos, that's rock'n'roll.

Christopher: Melody is why we're punk-boogie.

Steve: Everyone in the band has done lot's of other music things for years. Jason was in SAINT JAMES INFIRMARY, Chris sang in The PEECHEES, Jim played for TALK IS POISON and the legendary BLACKFORK, Andy even played guitar and sang for NUISANCE. But what you all are doing now is so different then all those other bands, and furthermore how the hell did you all get together?

Andy: Carson (bass) was also in The Cutz... I saw Jason on the street in front of Slim's and he asked me for Chris' number, because he wanted him to sing. I got jealous and offered a package deal... if you want Chris, you gotta take me as well.

Christopher: Our diverse - if you can really call it that - backgrounds make for a fresh landscape of sound. In my work, I deal with lots of bands, so I just want to make sure anything I do has a good excuse for existing.

Steve: What is the favorite drug of The Pattern?

Andy: If we were to draw a pie chart, beer would be the largest slice, followed by spirits. But the "E" drugs would be represented as well, chiefly ecstasy, Excedrin and ephedrine, which keeps us trucking down the road.

Steve: I'm kinda a musician guy too, and I played in a few bands, so I really want to ask the typical question here, you don't have to answer, but what kind of stuff influences your music, your look, your stage show, etc? Who writes your material, the lyrics, and

what if

the pattern

anything are you guys trying to tell people?

Andy: We listen to a fair amount of Sixties music, nothing too surprising. The MC5, Love, I like shit like that. And raging, blistering hardcore like Black Flag. We played Oasis quite a bit in the van on a recent road trip as well. I don't think we're trying to tell anybody anything, I just hope they have a good time, and maybe dance a little. I want to work hard, put on a good show, give the people something to talk about on the train ride home or whatever... a short, loud set, flashy shirts, colored lights... like some old soul revue or something.

Christopher: I really love sweet tragic music as well. I try to bring that into our sound. I love punk and being in a punk band is my dream, but like all the punk I love it's gotta say something. Some kind of emotional texture, vulnerability. When we play, for me it's about unpeeling as much of my day to day pretense as I can. Basically all I have to give is me. So I rattle myself and shake it in the most unself-conscious way I can trying to give the most true me I can. But people seem to think it's the exact opposite.

Steve: I know you guys recorded a demo right away, and now The Pattern has as

I've been told, 3 separate 7" EP's coming out on 3 pretty different labels. What labels and why? When will we see a full length LP?

Christopher: We have singles coming out on GSL, Alternative Tentacles and Gearhead Records which is a newish label that grew out of the magazine. Why? Uh because they all expressed interest. At first we thought we should pick one label and do one single, but then it seemed like a better idea to do all of them if the labels were cool with it. Singles are great and our songs and the way we write and play them work well with that format or whatever.

An album is a different sort of beast. It's a more permanent statement and reflection of a band. A single can be a snapshot and if it falls short on quality or something, its forgivable. We want to make a record that will last - it may not need to make a huge impression, but if someone stumbles across it in five years they'll be able to dig it genuinely. Also I don't want to rush into something that will make me or any of us cringe later on. I guess I mean we're working on it.

Steve: How can you explain your sounds? I mean you have a song like "Breakfast", it's in a way a very upbeat, boppy, melodic song, then "My Own Age" which is still melodic, but it has more of a dark vibe, almost Stooges feel?

Andy: I think we're still trying to find out what kinds of songs work for us, and which ones don't. Jason comes to

practice with a tune, and we argue and plea-bargain until it's economical and crisp, and hopefully catchy.

Steve: Are you guys going to do some touring, any interesting future plans?

Andy: I want to spend more time in the hot tub. That's my New Year's resolution, so if you want a band to play at your party, and you can guarantee that the hot tub will be over a hundred degrees, we'll be there.

Christopher: We are trying hard to balance having fun with doing what's necessary to be a band right now. It's different now than even a few years back for what its like to be in a band. There are so many groups and so many records - and a bunch of it sucks. It sort of puts the pressure on for justifying your existence as a band these days. We wouldn't want any labels to put us out if we weren't willing to do stuff like play out and tour, so we want to do as much of that as is possible. At the same time making sure its on our terms and satisfying. For us as a band and for everyone who buys a record or comes to our party. Because if it sucks, we all lose. ⊕

"I love punk and being in a punk band is my dream"



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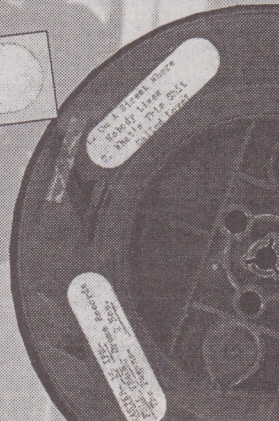
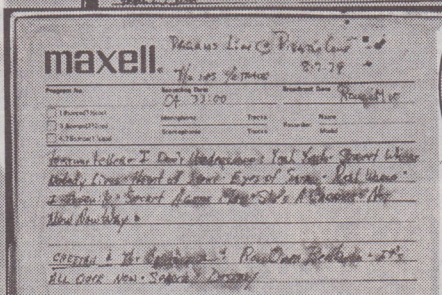
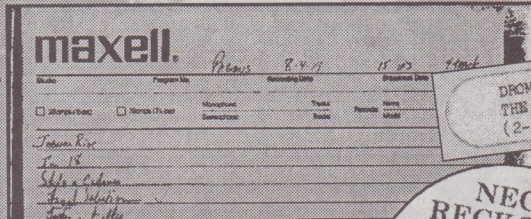
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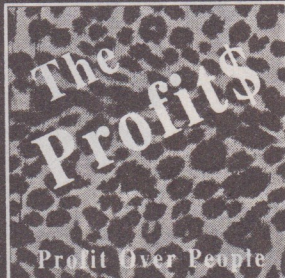
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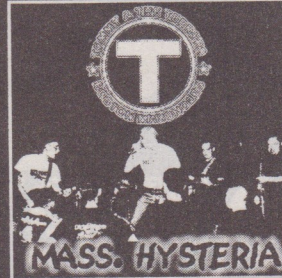
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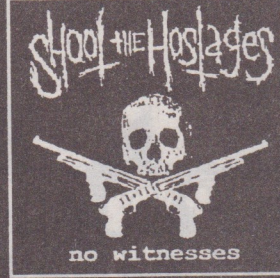
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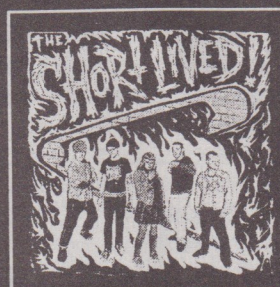
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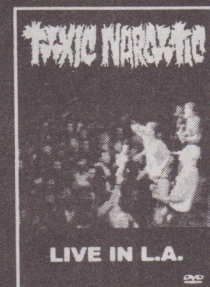
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ROPE BURN AND EMPTY BOTTLES:

INTERVIEW BY THE SLEAZEGRINDER



THE HANGMEN

"The thing of all this is, you gotta go with your guts..."

- Supersuckers

"You've got to bleed a little while you sing, or the words don't mean a thing." - The Cult

"I'm from Boise, so shooting holes in the walls doesn't seem that dangerous to me." - Bryan Small

In the late 80's, Los Angeles was a flurry of 3-chord extravagance; the Sunset Strip was like some neon Babylon, death- tripping glitter babies flashing pearly whites dripping with venom, and the dollars burned brightly in the endless night. Spandex fascism was the order of the day, cocaine tongues and Chinese takeaways ruled the airwaves, sincerity took a back seat to sin...But there were back alleys in these glam ghettos as well, where the night creatures lurked with bones in their hair and boots caked in blood. Mutated hold-outs from another dimension...punks, they used to call them. They partied in cardboard and slept at dawn in the murder district. It was in these shadows that the two worlds came together in a gushing climax of sweat, leather, and evil. And out of the murk crawled a new breed of anti-hero -

part rock star, part vampire, all cowboy. The most virile of this breed was a black-eyed rattlesnake named Bryan Small. And he had a posse. And they were called the Hangmen.

Feeling lucky and slinky, the 4-man gang inked a bloody, ill-fated deal with a plush crew of devils at Capitol records sometime during the flash metal gold rush, nobody's sure exactly when; but a rip snorting self-titled debut quickly followed. Sneering from the cover like the meth- and Harley Davidson-addicted cousins of the scarf mafia down at the Troubador, the Hangmen obviously meant serious business. And within the grooves of said record, a fearsome cabal of diamond-hard raunch and blistering cowpunk clinched the deal. The Hangmen found themselves running in the same circles as authentic, true blue bad asses like the Cult, the Four Horsemen, and

Circus of Power. And the bar was always open, and all the drinks were free. Then, the Hangmen were given a bus, and told to get on it. And everything went all to Hell. The tour was a war campaign that nobody expected to survive, and very few actually did. The next decade was a hazy one, at best. There was another record deal, this time with Geffen, and even another record...but unless you have \$30,000 to retrieve it from its prison in DGC's vaults, you'll never hear it. Mostly there were drugs. Drugs and booze and madness. But even though it seemed like Bryan Small was no longer a contender in the ragged rock hero game, he was still watching the pretty pictures through bloodshot eyes, waiting for the perfect moment to jump back into the ring. As the clock ran out on the last century, he made his move. Shanghaiing Jimmy James, the ex-gutter guitar slinger for criminally under-rated sleaze metal giants the Comatones, Bryan formed the nucleus of the Hangmen, mach 2000. This leaner, meaner version signed to punknroll upstart indie label Acetate, and the return to form blazer, "Metallic IOU", was released late last year. Sober and older, Bryan and the boys have proven that it's a long way back from Hell. And to the top, if you wanna rock and roll...

SG: So let's talk about the early daze.

BS: Well, I moved out to LA from Boise, Idaho.

SG: Moved to the jungle to be a rock star. Cool.

BS: Naw, it was never my intention to be any kind of star, I just wanted to be in a band, write my own songs and play some rock and roll. If I wanted to be a rock star, I would've quit a long time ago. (laughs) But I put my ad in the paper, with my influences, which were the Gun Club, Tex and The Horseheads, and the Rolling Stones. I put the first two in on purpose, because I knew it would weed out the people I really didn't want to play with. So from that I got my first guitar player and bass player, Johnny Holiday and Billy Macoy, and my drummer, Lenny; we used to kick around together in Boise. That's how it all started. I've had about a million different people in the band since then.

SG: Were you always called the Hangmen?

BS: Yeh, right from the first gig. Which was with the Replacements. We've gotten to play with most

it goes a little deeper than putting on a cowboy hat. I hope they actually listen to his songs, because Johnny was a lot deeper than all that. It wasn't just a cool look, that cat had soul. I think the real stuff, the honest stuff, outlasts all of that anyway.

SG: Who else was big in town at the time?

BS: Jane's Addiction, Guns and Roses. We played with them once, too.

SG: Did you guys hang out together?

BS: No. I don't know what street they think they came from, but...I mean, I'm friends with Duff, but I was just never a fan of those guys. I remember being at Geffen, this was before the Hangmen were signed to Geffen or Capitol. We were doing this Scream compilation, it must have been '86, and they're going, "We got this band, they're called Guns'n'Roses, what do you think?", and I thought, "I don't like it."

SG: So you didn't see the star potential.

BS: No. I mean, I like their songs better now, but at the time I thought it

ting drunk and shit. The same for the Geffen record. And this one, really. We're pretty serious in the studio.

SG: Looking back, can you see a natural progression in your songs from the early days?

BS: I haven't evolved much as a songwriter. (laughs) I've just pretty much stayed the course.

SG: How long did this one take to do?

BS: It took as long as the major label records, actually. We just wanted to get it right. We left a couple of songs off the record that might turn up later, maybe on an EP. I also want to get back in the studio to record some of the earliest Hangmen songs, from back in the day when we were straight up cowpunk...

SG: How's the early Hangmen stuff sound?

BS: Pretty much exactly like the Gun Club. I wanted to be Jeffrey Lee Pierce. But there already was one,

I JUST HOPE THAT SOME KID IN HIS EARLY 20'S KNOWS THAT IT GOES A LITTLE DEEPER THAN PUTTING ON A COWBOY HAT. I HOPE THEY ACTUALLY LISTEN TO HIS SONGS, BECAUSE JOHNNY THUNDERS WAS A LOT DEEPER THAN ALL THAT.

heroes over the years.

SG: Like Johnny Thunders.

BS: I remember playing with him in like, '87 or '88, and just blowing him off the stage. (laughs) He just sucked that particular night.

SG: Yikes. Did you apologize to him for showing him up like that?

BS: No, I had too much respect for him for any of that. Plus, he probably would've...well, I don't know what he would've done.

SG: Unfortunately, he spawned a vast legion of kids that used to be in hardcore bands that grew their hair out, ripped off some Chuck Berry riffs, and are now claiming to be genuine rock and rollers.

BS: Well, man, that's all right. I just hope that some kid in his early 20's knows that

of our

cal and cliched...

was just too methodi-

SG: So the Hangmen weren't part of the LA glam rock scene?

BS: No, we were playing with bands like L7, the Nymphs...

SG: The Nymphs. Now there's another major label tragedy.

BS: Yeh. I'm friends with Inger Lorre, she's a great talent. She's got a new band together that she's working with. Hopefully, we're all a little smarter now.

SG: How was it recording the first record for a major? Did you abuse the privileges of having a luxury studio and lots of time to record?

BS: No, we were really dedicated to making a good record. And Vic Maile was our producer...he produced Motörhead, y'know? So we were sort of in awe of the guy, and we didn't waste a lot of time get-

and he lived in LA too, so I started writing songs that were less like his. Although I still let some of that sound creep in, the Hangmen have eventually evolved out of that. But I still love those old songs.

SG: Do you have any favorites from "Metallic IOU"?

BS: Yeh, "Loners, Junkies, and Liquor Stores". I really like the energy in that one.

SG: Yeh, that's a great song. So what was the inspiration for that one? Just walking around the neighborhood?

BS: I was in rehab, actually.

SG: That's fucking perfect.

HOW THE SUPERSUCKERS BECAME THE GREATEST ROCKNROLL BAND IN THE WORLD

SG: You guys are friends with the Supersuckers, right?

BS: Yeh, they're great guys, really down to earth.

SG: Y'know, Eddie Spaghetti got punched in the face on stage at the Middle East here in Boston?

BS: Oh, no...

SG: Yeh, by a member of the Outlaws biker gang...some kinda cocaine thing...

BS: Jesus Christ.

SG: I know, it's weird, right? I mean, who wants to hit Eddie Spaghetti?

BS: Exactly. The Supersuckers are like, the nicest guys in the world...Crazy. Y'know, long before they were the Supersuckers, they lived in Tucson. We went down there to play, and they were in some glam band called Thai Pink.

SG: Thai Pink?!

BS: I know, pretty hideous. But later, Eddie told me that after they saw us, they changed their whole thing. He said that the Hangmen were a big influence on what the Supersuckers are today...that's really cool, because I think they're a really fucking great band...

"The day is gone, the night is long, love is dead, I can't go on/lonely streets, walk on by, I don't think, I'll survive/Can you see, the pain inside?/ I know this is bliss..."

SG: So I'm at this seedy strip club earlier tonight, and they're playing Thrill Kill Kult and all that jive, and I'm thinking, "you know what would sound perfect right now? The Hangmen's 'Bliss'...it just crystallized the whole atmosphere. I say, fuck sending the record to radio stations, send it to strip clubs.

BS: That's a good fucking idea, man. Y'know, Jimmy's ex-girlfriend was a stripper, and she used to dance to "Broke, Drunk, and Stoned" and she said everybody would really get into it, singing along and shit That's pretty funny.

SG: That's what I love about the Hangmen, man. You can dance to it. I mean, I don't find myself having to do it very often, but if I did have to dance, I'd play your fucking record.

BS: Right on, man.(laughs) Do whatever you have to.

THE STATE THAT I'M IN IS WEARING RATHER THIN

SG: So you're planning another tour...no

luxury bus like in the old days, this time.

BS: We acted up a lot on that tour, people would quit a lot. The bus driver quit, the tour manager quit...

SG: What do you do when an integral member of the road crew just splits like that?

BS: Just get another one, y'know, off with his head.

SG: I don't get it. Where do these labels get all the money? You'd think that you'd have to be selling a lot of fucking records.

BS: The majors make so much money off of their heavy hitters that it doesn't matter. They just throw stuff at the wall to see what sticks. We had riders, guitar techs...it was just ridiculous.



SG: All that shit doesn't seem very rock and roll.

BS: It's not. That's why I'm excited about going on this tour, going out to clubs on an independent label, I'm ready for it all, man, good and bad.

SG: What kind of critical response have you gotten from 'Metallic IOU'? Because the thing is, since the debut album, there's a whole new breed of people writing about rock and roll, and I don't think most of them were even around to get reference points like the Gun Club.

BS: Yeh, it's weird, isn't it? I mean, I'm glad you get where we're coming from, but it's definitely strange to read other people comparing us to something like Guns 'n' Roses, because we're not like that at all. But even if they don't exactly "get it", at least most of the press has been favorable so far. Especially since we play a kind of music that people really just don't do anymore.

SG: Maybe not here, but look at what's going on in Sweden.

BS: No shit. That's why I can't wait to get out there to play.

SG: The kids go nuts for balls-out rock and roll there.

BS: Well, we're ready to give it to them.

SG: What's your idea of a good audience reaction?

BS: Fervent worship. (laughs) I just hate people standing around with their arms crossed. I'd rather have people fucking hating us than that. I mean, here in LA it's hard to gauge. We do really well here, but we haven't been out of this fucking dump in years.

SG: How long are you going to tour for?

BS: As long as we can. We'll probably do a few trial runs first, before we launch a full scale...Jesus, "full scale", that sounds like we're going on an arena tour...but y'know, all over the country, anyway.

SG: Was there ever a time when you just said, "fuck it, I can't do this anymore"?

BS: No, even when it got real bad I knew we wouldn't give up. Even when all my guitars were in the pawnshop, I'd just borrow somebody's guitar to play the show.

SG: What do you think drives you to keep doing it?

BS: I don't know. It's either a blessing or a curse, whatever way I happen to see it in a given day. It is a blessing, actually. I mean whatever happens in my life, I can still pick up the guitar and play some songs, and then the other shit doesn't really matter.

SG: If somebody finds themselves digging the Hangmen, who else would you suggest they listen to? I'd say Gluecifer, Backyard Babies. Or go back a little and check out Motorcycle Boy and Gunfire Dance.

BS: Yeh, but you know, I hate to categorize things...hmm. Country music. If you like the Hangmen, go and listen to some country music.

SG: What's the Hangmen message, Bryan? What are you bringing to the people?

BS: What are we bringing to the people? The Real Thing, man. That's it. For once. †

For tour schedules and tales of terror from the Hangmen, go to www.acetate.com

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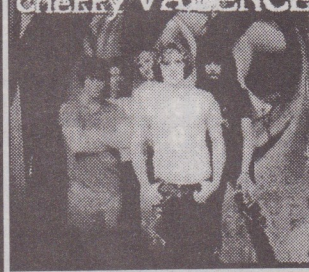
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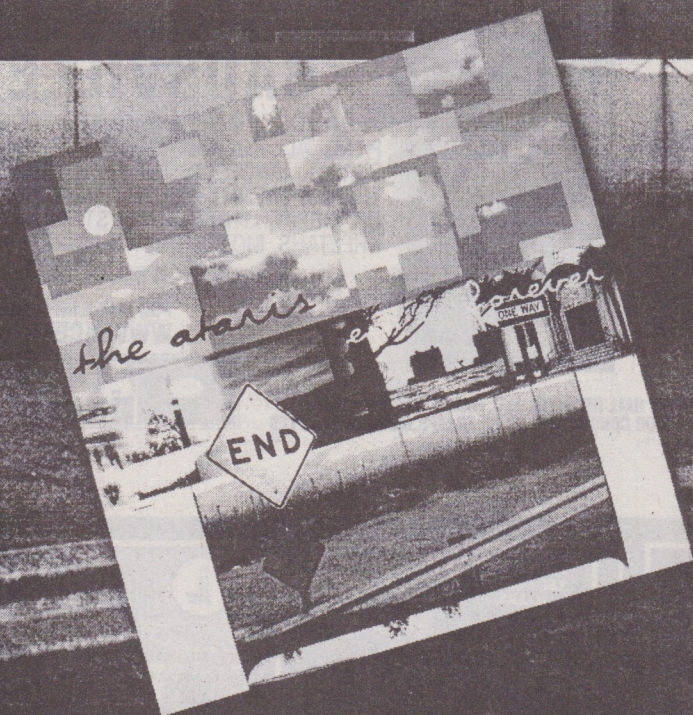
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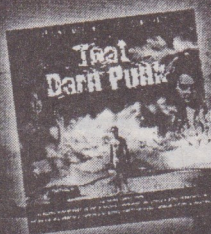
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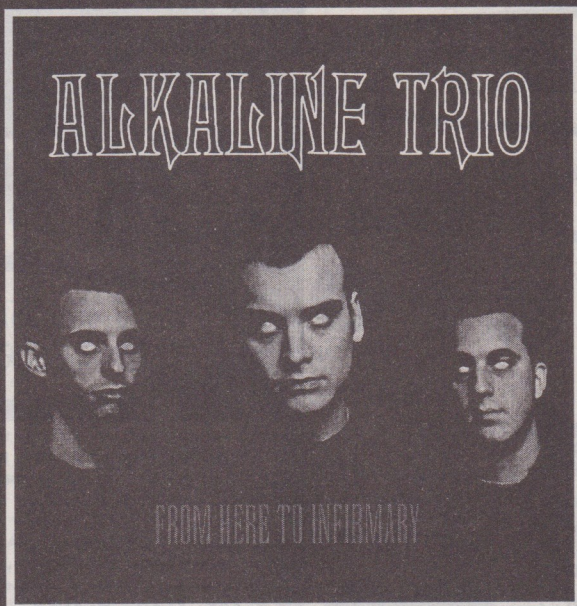
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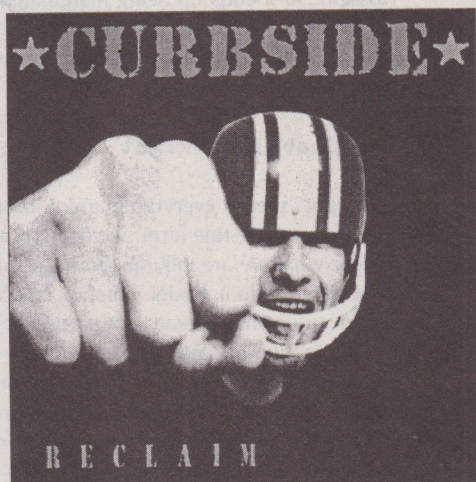
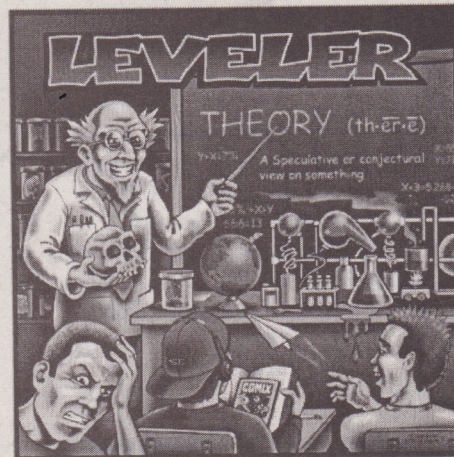
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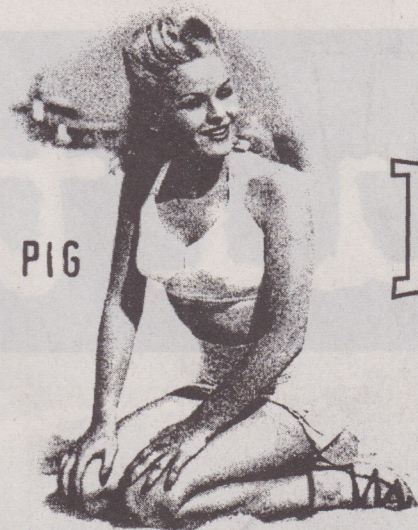
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Last issue we inadvertently failed to run the following article dealing with the activities of Massimo Introvigne and CESNUR, which was published in the Milanese journal *Orion*. We are therefore running it below for the sake of completeness. Note that it should be read in conjunction with Part 2 of this particular series, since on its own it is sadly detached from the overall context within which it should be embedded. Also, I urge everyone who is interested in learning more about the astonishing levels of scholarly corruption and collaboration that currently afflict the academic study of "New Religious Movements" to read the long-awaited and crucially important critique by Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, "'O Truant Muse': Collaborationism and Research Integrity," which will appear in the forthcoming anthology, *Misunderstanding Cults*, ed. by Benjamin Zablocki & Tom Robbins (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001).

- Jeff Bale

"Massimo Introvigne: Scholar or Politician? Global Domination and Religion as a Weapon"

by Lucio Tancredi.

From *Orion* VII:9 (September, 1998)

Introduction

"Human rights" are something undeniable. Very few people indeed will raise their hands to say that they, as a matter of principle, favour torture, the impoverishment of widows, or the massacre of those who speak one language instead of another.

Things therefore appear to be quite sim-

ple. However, they are not. First of all, we live in a complicated and violent world, where there are many, often mutual abuses, and where some abuses at least are invented. Everybody accuses, but not everybody has the means to have himself heard by the public. In Western-style democracies, the "public" actually consists of voters/viewers, i.e., people who, among other things and for various reasons which we leave to the psychologists, are actually fascinated by dramatic and bloodthirsty tales: injustices have always been a necessary ingredient of any show. Abuses attract attention. Everybody justifies this interest by saying that he only wants to put an end to such abuses; but the real situation — as invented abuses in the cinema show — is certainly more complex, not to say more perverse.

In any case, presenting a carefully selected range of abuses makes it possible to direct the aggressiveness of the viewers towards those who stand in the way of the power of those who complain about human rights violations. These enemies are turned into ordinary criminals. And crime calls for an executioner, who of course is also the person who raised the issue in the first place. The victim of the arrogance of this stronger party is even denied his own condition: he is presented as if he were the aggressive party.

This is why "human rights" are not, generally speaking, an abstract ideological issue. There are splendid exceptions of very honest people, however human rights are in most cases used as a tool for power. A tool theoretically available to all, of course, because everybody, quite rightly, has something to complain about. "Everybody", however, in a free market society, means everybody who has political and media power; and such

power in turn comes from financial power. And, as we all know, the financial power of the planet is firmly in the hands of the United States.

A few decades ago, human rights still belonged to the "Left". In those days, people used to speak about life in the factories, or about Chile, Vietnam, and Argentina, countries where American domination was exerted to its full extent; at the same time, human rights advocates were generally silent about other abuses, such as those committed in Communist countries. Today things have changed considerably. Causes are nearly always decided in the US. The Left, which is almost incapable any more of thinking in historical, economic, or social terms, has taken human rights as virtually its only *raison d'être*, so this outcome was almost inevitable. The Left may criticise the US attack on Iraq, but it cannot defend such an "enemy of human rights" as Saddam Hussein, so it ends up being marginalised or actually subordinated, as we can see in the case of Serbia or that of so-called "Islamic fundamentalism".

The Globalist Right

"Right" means everything and nothing. So when we use this term, we have to make it clear what we are talking about. In this case, we refer to a model which is basically American but has spread around the world. A combination of ideology and interests which promotes the capitalist revolution around the world, and which is therefore profoundly "subversive." At the same time, it disguises itself by speaking of "family values" or "religion", generally "Judeo-Christian", but also open to the typically mercantile suggestions of various "human

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potential" and entrepreneurial cults. The religious fanaticism of the grass roots is balanced by skilled ecumenical manoeuvres at the top.

For over a quarter of a century, a rich and aggressive group of individuals inside the empty container of the US Republican Party has been working on a project for a vast Right, based on a total economic free-market ideology, unconditional support for Israel, and religious mobilisation of the masses. We do not like to talk of conspiracies, but in this case we continually find the same names, although hidden behind a forest of initials, institutions, and bodies: Jerry Falwell, Paul Weyrich, Richard Viguerie, the "reverend" Moon, Tim and Beverly LaHaye, and Pat Robertson are probably the best known.

A very useful document can be found on the internet, entitled "Washington, Inc.: Creating The Machinery For Downsizing Labor Costs." It clearly explains their strategy:

"These efforts included an array of strategies and resources ranging from campaign funds to sophisticated efforts to recruit and indoctrinate talented youth for positions as conservative political advocates. At the center of this entire effort, however, was the creation of a new mechanism for engaging in and winning national policy debates — the ideological think-tank.

The new "think-tanks" permitted low-profile (even anonymous) support and direction from their creators and sponsors. They could place the "image" of a thoughtful academic on the nation's television screens, arguing that helping big corporations was good for the whole

country with no obvious link between that image and the tycoons who had financed it. They could feed the growing demand for public affairs programming that an increasingly commercial electronic news industry demanded with the arriving "information age." They could effectively absorb vast amounts of cash and create the illusion that centrally-agreed-to policy choices were the consensus of far-flung and seemingly independent public thinkers"

Little Italian Globalists

This strategy has been adopted by the allies of the US Right in other countries as well. We can take a very provincial example, compared to the large US political and cultural enterprises: Alleanza Cattolica, the self-styled "sister-group", and a rather poor one, of the Brazilian landowners' organisation Tradition, Family and Property. In recent years, perhaps under pressure from abroad, Italy has been submitted to a sudden and unnatural "bipolarisation", i.e., the introduction of a two-party, winner-takes-all voting system. There was already a Left, but they had to invent a Right, in only a few months' time, to oppose it. Alleanza Cattolica played a decisive role in the creation of the leadership of this Right, since it had worked for years on bringing up its own leaders in a framework which was Catholic but also based on the free market ideology, and since it was in touch (through TFP) with the US Right.

The website of the "Right in Italy" (<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2758/destra.html>), heavily laden with Italian flags and symbols of Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, calls Alleanza Cattolica the "Catholic association which has most consistently

taken the side of the Polo per le Libertà [the Right coalition]". Alleanza Cattolica has provided the spokesman — Alfredo Mantovano — for Alleanza Nazionale and the parliamentary group leader — Vietti — for the Centro Cristiano Democratico (the party of which Massimo Introvigne is also a leading member), whereas the cultural page of *Il Secolo d'Italia*, the party publication of Alleanza Cattolica, is run by another Alleanza militant, Marco Respinti. The basic project of Alleanza Cattolica is not Catholic traditionalism (something with which one may disagree, but which is still part of our national tradition), but the creation of a "true" Right, an imitation of the one in the USA. A Right based on free market, "Judeo-Christian" values, and the "defence of the West."

Money and Pseudo-Spiritual Multinationals

Alleanza Cattolica met with success also thanks to an extraordinary bluff, the establishment of CESNUR, a "Center for the Study of New Religions" devoted to research on what many call "cults", but with surprisingly apologetic aims. The founder was the patent lawyer and self-styled sociologist, Massimo Introvigne, one of the top leaders of Alleanza and once a particularly aggressive opponent of any suspected heresy. Some still remember his definition of the French Nouvelle Droite as "A stand-by ruling class for the Revolution" (Massimo Introvigne, "GRECE e Nouvelle Ecole", in *Cristianità*, n. 32, December 1977). According to him, French "neo-paganism" was:

"A 'cocktail' of evolutionism, neo-positivism, scientism, sexual revolution, and

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clearly Masonic doctrines in an 'Indo-European' package: in the first place in order to subtly corrupt those young people who escape from social-communist and progressive conformity, favouring their transformation into 'anonymous revolutionaries'; in the second place, in order to prepare to pollute any anti-Communist reaction and to try to satisfy its inevitable spiritual needs in an anti-Catholic and anti-metaphysical sense, in view of a dark and fatal neo-pagan mirage." (p. 5)

In other words, whatever did not fall under the wide wings of the Vatican was "revolutionary" in those days. It is therefore surprising, to say the least, to find Introvigne suddenly become ecumenical, wide open to quite angrily anti-Christian organisations. This kind of ecumenism can be understood only within the framework of the mentality of the US Right — "religion" is always good, a notion which René Guénon long ago denounced in his studies on neo-spiritualism and the Protestant mentality. CESNUR is

in the form of subvention of research expenses, subvention of publications, opportunities to sponsor and attend conferences, or direct fees for services, this money is not insignificant, and its influence on research findings and positions taken on scholarly disputes is largely unknown."

The Friend of the Americans

We were recently treated to a fascinating demonstration of the way in which small and large groups work together on projects of global domination. On July 30th, 1998, Massimo Introvigne — director of CESNUR, a militant of Alleanza Cattolica since his earliest youth and one of the five "consultori" of the organisation — was invited to speak as a witness in Washington before the International Relations Committee of the US Congress, in a joint session with the Commission for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The latter, typically, is a body which is supposed to deal with Europe but works

invited to the Washington meeting.

The Friend of the Americans calls for "Monitoring Critics"

The meeting was followed by a series of meetings behind closed doors between Introvigne and American officers responsible for what they call "security," though the rest of the world might well call it something else. On his internet site, the Italian speaker claims he gave advice on how to "monitor the anti-cult movement," both "nationally and internationally", an exciting new task for the US power system.

It was not by chance that Introvigne, during his speech, spoke in defence of two multinationals especially dear to global power, the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, self-proclaimed Messiah, GOP-funder, and long term friend of Ronald Reagan and the main televangelists; and the Church of Scientology. If these multinationals have met with problems in various parts of the world, the fault cannot be theirs. This time, the

playing a Jesuitically subtle game: the organisation tries to approach small but authentic groups, often close to our own milieu, in order to set up a wide front for the defence of the "multinationals of the imaginary."

Since it deals with a little-known field, CESNUR was quickly able to present itself as an authority, establishing relations with the small world of "sociologists of religion", a category of people, usually without a degree in sociology, who for years have largely been living on the funds they obtain from the rich US cult multinationals for doing "studies" which burnish the image of such cults, in court or with the media. The sociologist Benjamin Zablocki ("The Blacklisting of a concept: The strange history of the brainwashing conjecture in the sociology of religion", *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, October, 1997) denounced this typically American symbiosis between researchers and their financing principals:

"The sociology of religion can no longer avoid the unpleasant ethical question of how to deal with the large sums of money being pumped into the field by the religious groups being studied and, to a lesser extent, by their opponents. Whether

out of the USA. The agenda of the meeting clearly set down in terms of where good and evil lie: the discussion was supposed to revolve around "continuing religious intolerance in Europe." One of the speakers was a lawyer of Scientology, but Introvigne was definitely the guest of honour.

The meeting dealt with "religious intolerance" in certain countries: France, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Uzbekistan, Russia, Macedonia, Romania, the Ukraine, Turkey, and Belarus were mentioned by name and accused of imposing restrictions which were thought to be impermissible and alarming even before the meeting began. When Rambo's fellow countrymen start using words like this, there is reason to worry. A clear example of such "intolerance" came from Spain, where the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), certainly the most kitschy example of US right-wing televangelism (its main offices boast an enormous, pseudo-baroque staircase with statues of angels killing dragons), complained that it had spent over one million dollars to set up its propaganda machine, only to have its broadcasting permit revoked simply because the network had no licence. TBN asked the US government to take steps, and a representative of the network was among those

blame is put, not on the usual "Islamic fundamentalists", but on European "Socialist politicians" who are supposed to be leading an active "religious persecution." After having said that it is "not the task of scholars to give advice," Introvigne gave his own advice to the fellow countrymen of Madeleine Albright (whose spokesman had in the past threatened the Swedish government for having made some secret texts of Scientology public). According to Introvigne, it is not only the traditional areas of US interference in the Third World which are "at risk," but also "France, Belgium, Germany, and Greece." Public funds should be withdrawn from bodies dealing critically with cults (Introvigne made no mention of CESNUR, funded by the right-wing Piedmont Regional government); at the most, individual cult members who commit crimes can be prosecuted, leaving their instigators untouched.

As we already said, human rights abuses do exist. The problem lies in which ones we choose to focus on and what their relation is to the wider context. This is especially true in Germany, which has created extraordinarily arbitrary legislation aimed at nationalists, communists, and other "extremists." The theoretical purpose of these laws is to repress supposed "totalitarian movements"

(and these laws have been used in the past against Communists as well, outlawed in the democratic Bonn republic just as they were in Chile). Now, and for the first time, the Germans find themselves facing a true totalitarian movement, extremely rich, very well organised, with a worldwide structure, which infiltrates both the economy and politics, and which obeys orders coming from abroad. Germany has not actually taken any steps against this movement, but it has criticised it officially and it has insisted on not recognising it as a "religion," a definition which would put it beyond the reach of any form of control.

"Hatred" and the "Darkest Days"

To speak of "religious intolerance" in the only European country which has known peaceful co-operation between Catholics and Protestants for over three centuries is of course ridiculous. But even more ridiculous was the "public statement" issued by CES-NUR on August 15th, 1996. This organisa-

tion described its own congress as a "a successful celebration of religious scholarship, as well as of tolerance and freedom," then went on to condemn the threat made by the young German Christian Democrats to boycott a film starring the scientologist Tom Cruise, labelling this as "revelatory of an extremely dangerous bigotry identifying new religions as scapegoats for all sorts of social evils." This was even referred to as "reminiscent of the darkest ages in recent European history." The Cesnuriens completed their appeal, calling on governments to "to take immediate action to ensure that this campaign of hate is stopped without delay."

Orion readers are well aware of the rhetoric of "darkest days" and "hate," which has become a current issue due to Scientology's practice of filing charges against people on the basis of the infamous Mancino Law: a recent victim was a businessman in the Veneto area, found guilty of having accused the US multinational of having let his wife die without providing suitable medical care. Whatever the truth of his accusation, the follow-up suit shows the frighteningly arbitrary nature of this law: we can recall here that it punishes "anybody" who "in any way" expresses "ideas" of "hate" or "discrimination" with three years

The Right to One's Identity

In other parts of the world, the issue is often cultural: changing the religion of a people also means changing their identity. This is why the Chiapas Zapatistas have entered into a little-known conflict with local evangelicals, and why many Israelis insist on the need to control the influx of missionaries; why Greeks look with deep distrust at anybody who attacks the Orthodox church; why the Chinese, who well remember the political role played by missionaries in the past, look askance at the arrival of foreign proselytisers.

This does not mean we should take on any repressive cause, even when self-defence is involved. The social reaction to the cult invasion is made up of very mixed elements. As usual, it is often the weakest who are

hurt; we are thinking, for example, of the brutal injustice involved in the imprisonment of the Satanist Marco Dimitri in Italy, or of the mayor in Northern Italy who ordered obligatory psychiatric treatment for two evangelical preachers. However, we wish to emphasise the fact that in Europe, denying rights to cults is not an issue; what is involved is denying them the privileges unfortunately associated with the definition of "religion." The "persecution" of Scientology in Germany simply means that Scientology is subject to a cautious police surveillance, that it has to pay taxes, and that it even has to pay wages to its own employees.

The American Friend at war with the World

If the Empire has decided to let its subject, Introvigne, speak, this is obviously because he had something useful to say. It is interesting to see who invited the Italian patent lawyer to pontificate on "religious persecution." The invitation came from the Republican congressman, Christopher H. Smith, who — together with Senator Alfonse D'Amato, manages the Congress' "human rights" commission. Readers

probably already know about D'Amato because of the victory he won for the Jewish lobbies in their campaign against the Swiss banks.

Christopher H. Smith is certainly not a person who gets his salary without working. His website (<http://www.house.gov/chris-smith/PRESS.htm>) lists some of the causes he was involved in, albeit only during the first half of 1998. He is leading a campaign against the Burmese government; for having Milosevic condemned for "war crimes" and toughening sanctions against Yugoslavia; against China; against the former Communists in Eastern Europe; against the Sudan; against any opening towards Vietnam; a series of measures to prohibit abortion; to censor the internet, as usual on the pretext of fighting pornography; to defend products considered to be anti-ecological; to increase the number of police. He had a personal meeting with Binyamin Netanyahu; he organised a commemoration of Mother Teresa of Calcutta;

he has threatened the Slovak government; and he has pushed through a law for tripling the funds available to Radio Free Asia, a broadcasting station which has been spreading the values of the Empire for years throughout the Far East. In July 1997, he even promoted a law to oblige Japan to beg forgiveness officially for its aggression during the Second World War, as well as for the atrocities that it committed.

One especially important event was the approval, in October 1998, of a law proposed by Smith, which obliges the Big Policeman to take active steps around the world against "religious persecution." Let us not fall into the linguistic trap by asking, "what's wrong about that — surely you can not favour religious persecution?" What is important here is to understand the totally arbitrary nature of such a measure. On the one hand, "persecution" may simply mean (as in the case of Scientology in Germany) not granting an organisation the privileges associated with the status of a religion. On the other hand, jurists and scholars agree that no certain definition of the word "religion" now exists, and many believe that such a definition may never be agreed upon. As always, the issue is

not one of right and wrong as such; what matters much more is which rights and which wrongs are brought to the forefront. While demanding penance from Japan, Smith not only does not insist that Americans apologize for their aggression against Vietnam — he even actively opposes any opening towards that unhappy country.

The same can be said of each of the causes promoted by Smith. The abuses in

whereas he seems to have taken no interest in the accusations, also involving human rights, made against this organisation (of course he never asked Germany to cancel its laws mandating indefinite arrest for thought crimes). And of all the violence recently committed in the Balkans, Smith, like the international media, has decided to consider only the violence committed by the Serbs, that is, by those who showed themselves least

the other hand, are part of a project for creating a "right-wing" imagination based on "Judeo-Christian" values, to use against the other fancies and sexual causes of the "Left". The childish but thrilling fist fights about abortion, about the rights of homosexuals, and about "politically correct" language ("chairman" or "chair-person"?) are gradually taking the place of any reflection about who is dominating the world.

the Sudan (whether real or imaginary does not matter) attract his attention just when that country became an obstacle to US imperial domination over Africa, whereas abuses in Saudi Arabia or Israel do not interest him at all. Together with D'Amato, Smith in 1993 even went so far as to present a law, which fortunately was not approved, condemning Germany for its "persecution" of Scientology,

willing to be globalised. These stances are based on two notions which are deeply rooted in American culture: the notion that the US is morally right, and that it has the right to apply its ideas, by force if necessary, in every corner of the world.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the struggle against abortion (a field where Smith has met with some success), on

Ultimately, as exemplified by Smith's hypocritical behavior, this supposed concern for ethics abroad is used as pretext to allow the United States to play the role of planetary policeman. Alleanza Cattolica's own roots may lie in Latin America, where phony noblemen supply coffee for breakfasts throughout the USA, but it is certainly doing its best to fit into the worldwide network of the US Right. +

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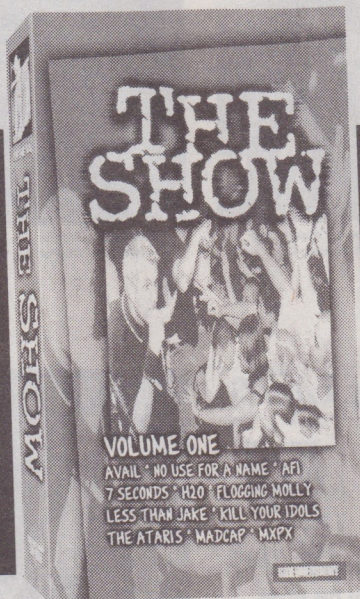
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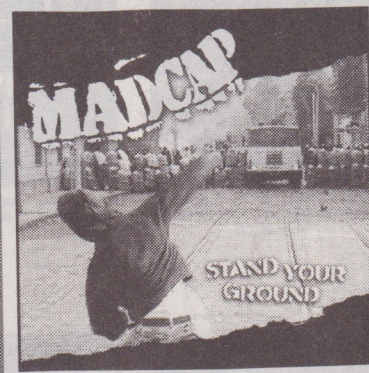
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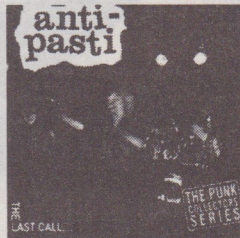
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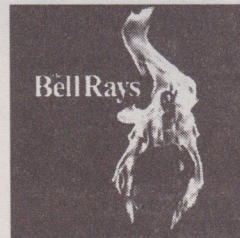
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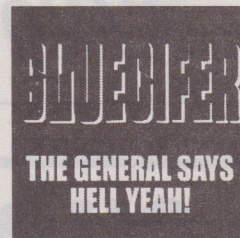
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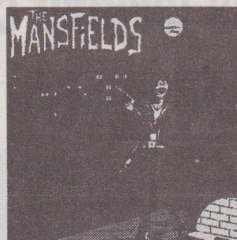
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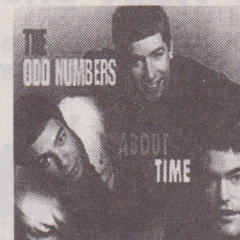
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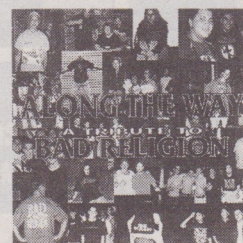
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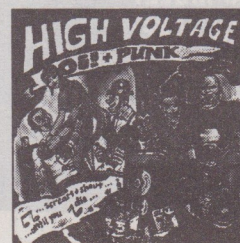
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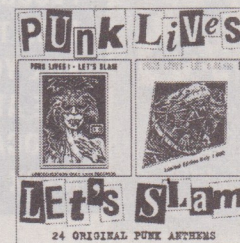
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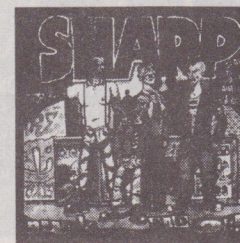
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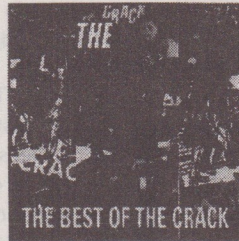
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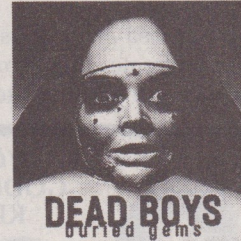
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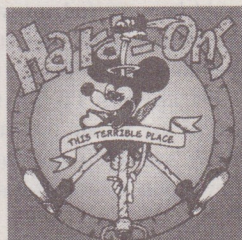
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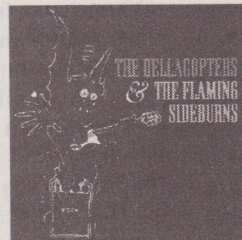
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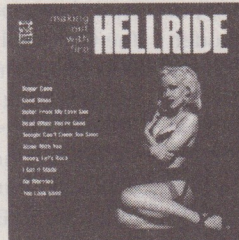
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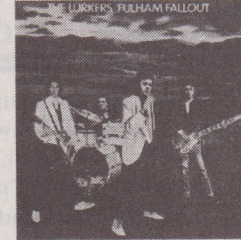
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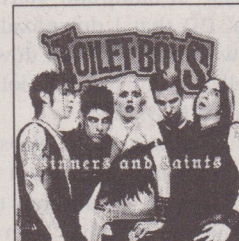
The Royal Beat Conspiracy - Shake What You Have Got AFROCD 007 Format: CD



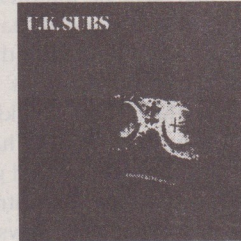
Slaughter and The Dogs - Do It Dog Style AHOYCD 131 Format: CD, LP



Superbees - Got This Feeling 45 CDTOO2 Format: 45



Toilet Boys - Saints and Sinners CF 022 Format: CD



U.K. Subs - Another Kind of Blues AHOYCD134 Format: CD



VIA - This Is Punk, This Is Oi!.. This Is Step-1 SOSCD 001 Format: CD



The Vapors - New Clear Days MODSKACD 011 Format: CD



Vice Squad - The Very Best Of... CDPUNK 116 Format: CD



The Buzzcocks - AUF WIEDERSEHEN CRDVD 003 Format: DVD



Dead Kennedys - DMPO's On Broadway CRDVD 001 Format: DVD



Before I really get started, I'd like to mention that my radio show, "Sonic Overload", can now be heard on the web every Wednesday from 3 to 4:30 PM EST. The station is Allston-Brighton Free Radio and the site is www.abfreeradio.org. Go to the station's website and click on the webcasting link. And check out some of the other programming on there, as well. There's a schedule on the site.

+ + +

So I missed another issue and I'm barely getting this column in under deadline. Procrastination seems to be the name of the game in my life, lately. Can't get shit done. Too damn



many distractions. The biggest one is the device on which I'm pounding out these hopefully-inspirational words of prose. My new computer. I've put my slow-as-fuck and buggy Macintosh out to pasture (although my wife continues to

use it for school) and bought a machine that has the Devil's operating system, Windows. I've made Bill Gates just a bit more wealthy. (Hey Bondi... ask for a raise. He can afford it!) It's distracting because I'm now able to net-surf more efficiently, talk to friends and enemies on-line and, best of all, download music — all of it without getting those dreaded error messages that seemed to appear every ten minutes. Fucking pain in the ass that was. So I bought a Gateway computer and I'm happy... of course, that means that god knows when there will be another issue of *Suburban Voice*, but I'm enjoying the 37-song Bastards' CD that I downloaded off an MP3 site...not Napster, by the way, but I've been downloading tons of music off there, as well. I don't feel one iota of guilt about it, either. This is fucking AWESOME!

I know that *Hit List* had an article about Napster a few issues back, but I figured I'd get in my two cents about the whole thing. The so-called "industry" is up in arms about the whole Napster deal. That's not news to anyone who has been following this saga. By the "industry," I mean the RIAA, the music publishing firms, and the major labels. As of this writing, in late February, Napster could be on a death watch, as five of the six major labels have rejected any sort of working settlement. Only BMG is willing to work something out with Napster. Anyway, a pox on all of 'em. And a pox on Metallica and other artists of their ilk who are going into fits over people trading their music on-line. But downloading music isn't going anywhere. If Napster dies, something will replace it. People aren't going to stop trading music on-line.

Yes, I'm a recent convert. A true believer. Maybe I should clarify. I always thought Napster was a cool idea, but now I've had the opportunity to check it out firsthand. I'm not sure if you could say I've become a dyed-in-the-wool download addict, but it's become one of the distractions I mentioned above. It'd be even worse if I had a DSL or cable connection (which will hopefully be the case at some point), but I'm lovin' 56.6K after a few years at 28.8. I'm having a goddamn blast. Rediscovering all those long-lost gems from

my childhood, finding rarities by favorite bands, and checking out some new stuff. Burning CD's for my own use, to give to the radio station, and to trade with friends. A high-tech version of tape-trading. And the quality is excellent. It really gives me a charge that a song can cross my mind, I can download it on Napster or one of the other MP3 sites I've been tipped off about, burn it on a CD, and enjoy it blasting from my stereo in a matter of minutes.

But that's stealing, you say? Technically, that might be true. But given how sleazy the music business tends to be, how much artists have been raped over the years (and there are some artists who have come out in support of Napster and other types of musical file sharing), so fuckin' what? Sure, some folks are just going to download stuff and never purchase it, but a lot of people will use it as a tool to learn about new music and buy the "finished product." It's a way for music to get exposed to a wider audience.

Two decades ago, the industry was shitting a brick about home taping. "Home taping is killing music," they howled. But the industry survived, didn't it? They'll survive Napster too. They'll find a way to harness it for their interests. Yet if they choose to squash it and shut it down, it'll be a case of shooting themselves in the proverbial foot (forgive the cliché). It's going to piss a lot of people off and they'll just find other means to download and trade MP3's. And there could be a backlash...people could become fed up with the Gestapo-like tactics of the RIAA and the major labels and start boycotting their products. That'd be my response. In all honesty, I avoid buying major label releases at this point, anyway. I'll buy the occasional reissue (used, if I can), but most of my music purchases go for independent releases, and usually via such awesome mailorder outfits as Ebullition or at the mom & pop record stores in and around Boston.

In my case, 95% of the music I've been downloading is stuff I'd already purchased and worn out on vinyl. Or is out of print. Or has never been commercially available, like the song parodies from the Don Imus show. Yep, I have an MP3 of Rob Bartlett imitating Rush Limbaugh singing "I Like Friends With White Faces." My local store ain't going to have that ditty. I look at the shelves full of vinyl and CD's and tapes and feel no guilt at all about adding to my collection in this way. And the anti-authoritarian part of me loves giving the middle finger to the industry and bands like Metallica. Speaking of the once-mighty Metallica, who haven't made a decent record since, oh, 1987 or so, they're hypocrites. I'm not the first person to point this out, but here's a band who built their rep by fans trading their early demos. Now, if you tried to trade those demos on-line, you're likely to facing legal action or something. Talk about forgetting your roots.

So this is all great fun. My wife thinks too much fun...we've had debates over whether this is theft or not — Ellen's an artist and has her own perspective on these things — but she's downloaded some tunes herself. It's a complicated issue and I can understand some of the anti-Napster arguments. But it's still a wonderful tool. Shawn Fanning — you're the man!

+ + +

So that's something positive or enjoyable. And I don't have too many complaints in my personal life, either. But I've been feeling disillusioned about quite a number of things, lately. Political issues. Punk scene politics. Nothing ever changes. In fact, it seems to go full circle. Same shit for 20 years. I should be used to it by now. I remember the night Ronald Reagan got elected. I was a junior at Boston University and my roommate was a staunch Republican.

Generally a nice guy — he kept to himself, didn't give me a hard time. Didn't say much of *anything* to me, in fact. By the way, his roommate the year before had been Joey Ramone's step-brother, so that's kind of cool. But the night 'ol Ronnie got elected, Carl comes bursting into the room singing "Happy Days Are Here Again." Too fucking much! Talk about being slapped in the face with harsh reality. I wasn't too into politics or issues at that point, but I still understood the pure evil his election represented.

Anyway, the recent *coup-d'etat* where Bush was essentially installed into the presidency by the Supreme Court makes me think we've gone back in time 20 years. Not that Bill Clinton was all that great — he was way too conservative on a lot of issues for my liking and, of course, he was a scumbag of the first order. Welfare reform that's led to increased poverty, a huge increase in the prison population, sanctions that have caused the death of half a million Iraqi children...not a legacy that inspires a lot of admiration from this writer. I'm also not sure that Al Gore would've been all that much better, but yeah, I suppose I'd rather have him in there than Bush. How about some of those cabinet appointments, such as anti-environmentalist Gale Norton at Interior? Or right-wing neanderthal John Ashcroft for Attorney General? During Bush's first few weeks in office, he's reinstated the gag order for overseas reproductive clinics, started pushing a tax cut that's only going to benefit the wealthy, and bombed Iraq. And don't get me started on his wanting to give federal money to faith-based programs.

Of course, the mainstream media are still obsessing with Clinton's shenanigans — the last minute pardons, the alleged "trashing" of the White House, etc. Granted, some of the pardons were questionable, but what about when George Bush Sr. pardoned Casper Weinberger? And who could forget Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon? Also, Clinton has been criticized for collecting large sums of money for speaking engagements, including \$100,000 for an upcoming lecture at Salem State College, about 10 minutes from where I live. But where was the outcry when Ronald Reagan collected \$2 MILLION for speeches in Japan shortly after his presidency ended. Frankly, I'm a bit taken aback that anyone would be paid \$100K for talking, but the point is that Clinton's been held up to more criticism about it than previous ex-presidents. The only recent former president who hasn't cashed in on the lecture circuit is Jimmy Carter. But it's time for the pitbulls in the media to let go, already.

So Bush is in and both houses of Congress are controlled by Republicans. It's starting to feel like it did in the 80s, when Reagan was in power. Maybe worse, because now all three branches — Executive, Legislative and Judiciary — are under conservative control. A lot of the same faces. The same regressive, backward-looking politics. In-your-face religious zealotry. Well, it'll be good for punk rock and hardcore, I suppose. That's what some think. Perhaps it's true. After all, some of the anger in the hardcore of the early 80s was spurred by outrage over 'ol Ronnie. It'd be foolish to suggest Reagan caused hardcore to happen, but he certainly provided a target, a stimulus in some quarters. If there's a tangible enemy in the White House, response comes in many forms, includ-

ing through music.

As an interesting aside, Boston's hardcore bands in the early to mid-80s, as a whole, weren't all that radical or even political. Sure, you had the Proletariat with their left-wing viewpoints. But, in the main, there was a pretty well-entrenched apoliticism or even conservatism in Boston's scene. Anyone remember the brouhaha over the FU's "My America" in *Maximum Rock 'n Roll*? And the other big bands — Jerry's Kids, SS Decontrol, Gang Green, DYS, etc. — didn't

have any sort of left-wing agenda either. Siege's lyrics were somewhat political, but despite their lofty, legendary rep they were never that big a band here. Hard to believe, but true. It continues to this day. There are pockets of bands and people with radical ideas. Some are well thought out, some aren't. But there are individuals trying to effect a change. For instance, I know some punk people who do clinic defense work to protect women seeking abortions or other reproductive services from the pro-life goons. But Boston's various punk and hardcore scenes are mainly apolitical or, in some instances, conservative. And there's also an "anti-PC back-

lash," with individuals espousing reactionary viewpoints. Sometimes, it's meant to tweak the more-humorless individuals in the activist crowd (can't say that's always such a bad thing, either), but not always. There's an ugly undercurrent at times, which we'll get to later.

Getting back to the Reagan years, there aren't a lot of memorable specifically anti-Ronnie songs I can think of from that period. "Reagan Youth" by Reagan Youth, perhaps. Songs from MDC's first album. Dead Kennedys, of course. The "President Reagan can shove it" line on TSOL's "Superficial Love." Maybe "Hey Ronnie" by Government Issue, although that wasn't their best material. But I couldn't find too many worthwhile anti-Ronnie songs that I wanted to play on my radio show to "commemorate" his 90th birthday. Still, the anger was there. The feelings of disillusionment, alienation, fear, etc...it all came out loud and clear from such bands as Crucifix, Articles Of Faith, Poison Idea, Black Flag, Discharge (who were dealing with the equally-regressive politics of Margaret Thatcher in their native UK) and a ton more. Maybe it's just a matter of time until we hear from Dubya Youth or something. I just hope that it won't be mindless sloganeering or rhetoric. That there's something behind the lyrics. Perhaps some solutions or ideas offered.

I know that the punk scene ain't no fuckin' utopia. Shit, I figured that out a *long* time ago, even when I was something of a naïve idealist. I remembered how idiotic things can get during a recent Angelic Upstarts' show in Boston. Actually, it was a show they were *supposed* to play but didn't, because it got shut down due to a fight. I was debating whether or not to write about this incident in my column, but it's been on my mind so here it is.

I don't even know all the details or all the hows and whys, but

So Bush is in and both houses of Congress are controlled by Republicans. It's starting to feel like it did in the 80s, when Reagan was in power.

HIT SQUAD

it happened during Oxblood's set. Apparently some people in Boston have a beef with Oxblood and vice-versa. I don't know. The show's promoter seems to think, in retrospect, that it wasn't a good idea to book Oxblood in the first place. There were apparently different factions at this show. Left-wing skins, right-wing skins, etc. I also know that someone in the audience called Oxblood's vocalist Mac, who happens to be black, the "n" word. As I said, I don't keep up with the different factions, in-fights, etc. Whatever the ultimate cause, there was a good-sized brawl and the show got shut down before the Upstarts could play. Cops showed up, I saw a few people get arrested. The whole thing really sucked. The Upstarts haven't even played here since 1982. Somehow, I doubt they'll return anytime soon and probably not to the Boston area. The whole scene was depressing. I know there are fights, but I hadn't personally seen anything like this at a show in quite awhile. Even shows where you think there might be the potential for trouble had gone off without a hitch.

But what really pissed me off was, when talking on an e-group about the incident a few days later, one guy with right-wing leanings (who had actually left the show before the fight started) wrote "the whole point was to not let AU play the show to begin with." Excuse me, but who the fuck are you to tell anyone who can play or can't play or deny anyone the opportunity to see a band? Ridiculous! Anyway, the whole situation had me in a funk for a few days, though that was largely cured when Conflict came later in the week. It was peaceful for the most part. A few skirmishes, apparently, but quite a

different experience. So that made a bit of a difference.

But there are times when I throw up my hands and wonder why the hell am I still hanging around? Sure, I love the music. More than love it...it's my passion and no doubt it's the passion of my colleagues here at *Hit List*. I've met so many cool people and bands over the years. But I'm tired of all the squabbling. The factions. The fights. The finger-pointing. And I'll have to admit that the influx of reactionary politics is irritating. Sure, they have their right to free speech and can spout whatever venom they want as much as I can spout my more left-wing ideas. But I'll admit that the right-wingers get on my nerves. Not that I don't have the courage of my convictions, but I just don't feel like arguing with people who take Skrewdriver lyrics to heart. That's just the way it is. But I won't let the fuckers get me down. Or try not to, anyway...

+ + +

Enough venting... let's get on to the review segment. Here are some recent releases that are kicking my ass and making me forget about all the bullshit mentioned above...

BOOKS LIE — "It A Weapon"

It (sic) a weapon alright — a riveting musical weapon. Former members of some underrated NYC bands, including Adam Paterson from Yum Yum Tree and Your Adversary and Bill Miller of Tub (who put out a brilliant album and then promptly disappeared), A tandem of innovative, explosive hardcore and aggressive math rock that's difficult to pigeonhole. Slashing guitars, hoarse vocals and strong, driving rhythms. Disparate influences — one can hear echoes of mid- to late 80s DC bands (Rites Of Spring, Fugazi, Swiz), Black Flag, Fuel, etc. Provocative from both a musical and lyrical



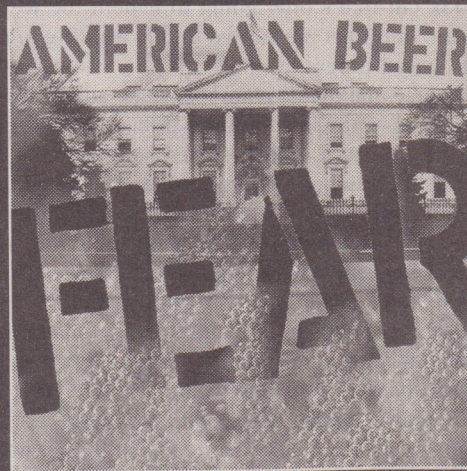
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FEAR "American Beer"

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perspective. "Capitalism Is Some Kinda Crazy Ass Vampire" draws one in on its title alone, and has a jolting surge of aggro to back it up. Hope this band will stick around awhile. (Satellite Transmissions, PO Box 4432, Boulder, CO 80306)

BRIDE JUST DIED — "All Hallow's Eve"

Rough 'n catchy punk rock. I've played this album a number of times, and it continues to provide a solid charge. Scrappy tunes with an older influence and ex-Damned drummer Rat Scabies produced, but it doesn't really sound like his former band. Raspy vocals, slashing/clanging guitars, and a melodic core. Horrorting lyrics, but the sound is less goth and more garage, although that changes for the lengthy, organ-laced plodder "Deadbeat," which sounds like nothing else on this disc; an unexpected change-up, but there's nothing wrong with a bit of variety. Most of the time, though, Bride Just Died slam it out with brash verve. (NDN, PO Box 131471, The Woodlands, TX 77393-1471)

DUMPSTER JUNKIES — s/t

It's got to be all the tourists that drive these Cape Cod residents bonkers. How else to explain the pure hatred and malevolence packed in the Dumpster Junkies' blazing punk rush. Razor-sharp guitars, rage-filled vocals, and lyrics that pull no punches. "Eat my shit you fuckin dick" and "I don't give a fuck about you stupid pricks" are just two examples of the Junkies' poetic approach to songwriting. "I Don't Care," on the other hand, is about wacking off to porn and is a bit more direct than, say, the Who's "Pictures Of Lily." Sarcastic, obnoxious and 100% in-your-face. I'd say that's a good combination, but sensitive types might get offended. That's their fucking problem. (Burnt Hairy Butt, 7 Spinnaker St., Sandwich, MA 02563)

ALQUINT

TEAR IT UP — "Just Can't Stand It"

As good as Tear It Up's 7" on Havoc was, this 12" EP blows it away. Superior production, but still not too slick and it's a bombardment of full-tilt thrash mania. For those of you who don't know, Tear It Up consists of most of the personnel from the late, great Dead Nation and the method remains the same. Hard, fast, angry and in-your-face hardcore delivered in succinct blasts. No gap between songs to catch your breath, except for the end, where they catch their breaths to indulge themselves in a fun cover of Kiss' "Deuce." "What's The Problem" slows things down, borrowing a bit from DYS' "More Than Fashion", and it's pretty damn close to an anthem. Lyrics tend to draw from the darker recesses, expressing frustration, hatred and rage. But the whoops 'n hollers for "Just Can't Stand It" indicate that this is a good form of musical therapy for all involved. The unbottled rage provides a cathartic release. Or, in layman's turns, it gives you a good kick in the ass and puts a smile on your face. Excellent hardcore, the way it should be. (Deranged, PO Box 543, Stn. P, Toronto, ON M5S-2T1, CANADA)

UNITED SUPER VILLAINS — "Choke Slammed Back To Life"

After a period of time where it seems as though all the music that comes through my mailbox is tepid emo, constipated metal-core, lethargic stoner rock, or alt rock cutesiness, the debut full-length by the almighty USV has arrived. Coming in the same package as the equally-choice Tear It Up album...a pure hardcore bonanza! Gord from Deranged sure knows how to make my day. Piledriving hardcore to rock your world. Aggressive, angry and hammering. USV are a thrash machine, also able to mix up tempos and intersperse oh-so-clever movie clips — granted, that ploy isn't too unique anymore, but the transitions are flawless and jolting. The lyrics are sharp and unafraid to pull punches, whether addressing petty scene politics, creeping Christianity in the scene, or a despised former band member. Karl's vocals have the agitated rasp of Blaine from the Accused, and the musical assault doesn't let up for a second. (Deranged, same as above)

WOLFPACK — "Allday Hell"

Completely fucking blazing hardcore. A Swedish five-piece that come out storming and don't let up until the needle leaves the grooves at the end of each side. Relentless and punishing thrash, and harsh vocals that dish out the bile. There's certainly a page taken from what's happened before — it'd be tough to deny the influence of Discharge, Doom, etc. But it's still a formidable sound, a sonic tidal wave with big sharp pointy teeth, to mix metaphors and quote from Monty Python. Fuck the metaphors, anyway. Loud, hard and fast. How's that grab 'ya? (Anomie Records, Feldsieper Strasse 13, 44 809 Bochum, GERMANY)

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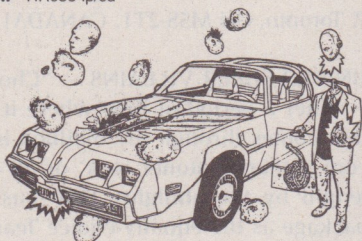
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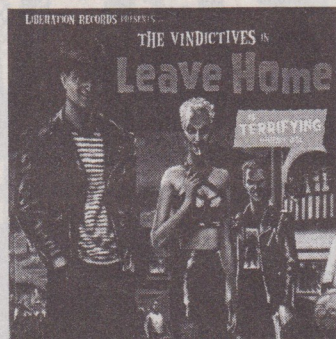


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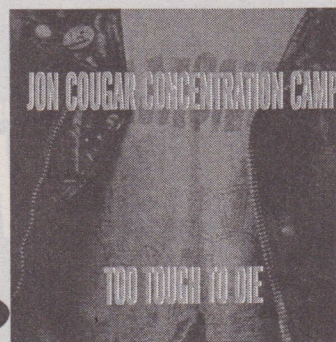


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BURNMAN
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The U.S. Senate Commerce Committee gathered together in the hall of degradation on September 13th. Senator John McCain's (Republican-Arizona) highly-anticipated Marketing Violent Entertainment to Kids hearing was finally called to order as the clock struck 9:30 AM. The issue was again intensively debated on September 27th, with still more testimony being introduced.

The Littleton tragedy has been nothing but a new cash cow for would-be censors to exploit and use to strengthen their arguments that music, video games, and movies are solely responsible for violence in society, and as a result this particular incident didn't go unmentioned at the hearing. This cash cow

marketed to young people. FTC Chairman Robert Pitofsky claimed that "by desensitizing young people to the consequences of violence, by making violence seem commonplace and ordinary, by cumulative celebration of the effectiveness of violence, we make violent behavior more likely to occur." Pitofsky continued, "To those who argue that no matter what is said now, the ultimate effect will be some sort of government censorship and intrusion on First Amendment rights, my answer is: it ain't necessarily so. There is no intention, directly or indirectly, to control content."

Yet government officials have recently passed a number of bills that attempt to limit and effectively ban allegedly obscene entertainment media. On September 20th

by young people seeking admission to any "R" rated film. These stricter admission policies are laughable. My last trip to the movies proved to be more of a hassle than a fun night out. A theater manager gave me a difficult time when I sought admission. My driver's license was held for more than five minutes, as the manager combed over every aspect of it to make certain that I wasn't presenting a fake ID. Before arriving at the theater I had an easier time purchasing cigarettes for my friend (who had forgotten his license)! As a United States citizen one can obtain a Learner's Permit at the age of 16, but under this strict movie admissions policy that same individual is considered unfit to view an R rated movie! It is skewed logic such as this that

Drawing Blood in the Ongoing Culture War

by Jess Alexander

has already been milked dry, and the officials that have exploited this tragedy have shown nothing but disrespect to the families that have lost loved ones. Tensions have reached an all-time high, as would be censors continue to introduce countless oppressive bills to ban allegedly offensive music and other entertainment mediums outright. At Rock Out Censorship (ROC), we have received an avalanche of incident reports from innocent students who have been threatened by school officials for wearing music T-shirts, having unconventional hairstyles, and listening to commonly blacklisted albums. These students are victims of post-Littleton hysteria, and those that have been targeted walk the halls with uncertainty.

Government officials constantly use the same tired rhetoric about "Protecting Children" to whitewash their horribly one-sided policies, but where are they when America's youth truly need guidance and assistance in dealing with such difficult issues as AIDS and racism? Militant right-wing government officials always pay lots of lip service to children, but in the end they typically use them as stepping stones for their careers. Rock Out Censorship's Randy Payton noted, in his "Behind The Violence In Media Censors" article, that "The history of using congressional hearings to censor-by-intimidation America's creative community is a long and sordid one, always with bad, sad results."

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently released its report on the influence of violent material on kids, after President Clinton's request to conduct a study to determine whether violent materials are

the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation approved the Children's Protection from Violent Programming Act (Senate Bill 876) by a 16-2 vote. Senator Fritz Hollings (Democrat-South Carolina) introduced the bill. "The question today is no longer whether television violence impacts our children adversely. We know that is does, and we have known for decades," said Senator Hollings. "I'm pleased that the Committee supported my call for action." The bill directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to determine how effectively the V-Chip and content-based rating system are protecting children from television violence. If the FCC determines that the V-Chip and ratings system do not effectively serve the governments' compelling interest in protecting children from television violence, then the FCC must impose a blanket prohibition on the delivery of violent programs when children are likely to be watching. The bill further directs the FCC to determine what constitutes violent programming and determine during what hours it may be shown.

Other recent initiatives have undermined citizens' rights to purchase, hear, and view what they have a constitutional right to. June 8th marked the implementation of a restrictive policy adopted by the National Association of Theater Owners, which requires the showing of photo IDs

makes would-be censors' arguments very weak. One can assume that driving an automobile is far more difficult and risky than viewing an R rated movie, but apparently these movie censors have no problems with beginning drivers, as opposed to young movie patrons. I hope to install a TV/VCR combo in my car so that I can view R-rated films while running stop signs and whizzing by senior citizens struggling with their walkers, all the while flipping the obligatory middle finger at my neighbors.

I believe that the September 13th hearing was another fine example of political opportunism. As American Civil Liberties (ACLU) legislative counsel Marvin Johnson commented, "Last week, the FBI cited statistics showing that school violence is at its lowest level in years; today the FTC is citing a correlation between escalating violence in the media and youth crime. They can't have it both ways." ACLU Associate Director Barry Steinhardt added that "Congress should not take the issuance of the FTC report on media and youth violence as an occasion to pass legislation restricting speech based on a false premise."

Citing the Kaiser Family Foundation as its source, the *New York Times* recently reported that 22% of children spent their time playing video games, whereas 22% spent time on homework, 9% using e-mail, 15% web surfing, and 18% on other activities. According to Ms. Warren, one of several parents interviewed by the *New York Times'* John Leland, "I think they should have their privacy", referring to Internet

usage by children. "There's nothing really I have to hide. I just don't like people looking over my shoulder," said Warren's 14-year-old daughter, Alison. But recent trends suggest that the government increasingly wants to baby-sit its own citizens.

On September 28th the *New York Times* published a follow-up article on the recent hearings, which allowed parents to voice their opinions regarding the legislative push to ban allegedly violent entertainment media. "What decision they make is not going to affect what my children see," said Mr. Horst, a Michigan resident. Mark Obsunick, another Michigan resident, commented that any attempt by Washington to regulate Hollywood would be "a waste of time." The majority of the parents agreed that it was their responsibility to monitor what their children viewed and not the government's. Yet officials apparently believe that they have a moral responsibility to protect American children from violent movie content. One argued that Universal Studio's target audience for its PG-13 movie "The Mummy" was supposedly 12- to 34-year olds, whereas the merchandising campaign for that same film was aimed at boys' 4-14 years of age.

Donald E. Cook, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) testified before Senator McCain's circus, "Numerous studies indicate that a preference for Heavy Metal music may be a significant marker for alienation, substance abuse, psychiatric disorders, suicide risk, sex-role stereotyping, or risk-taking behaviors during adolescence." It has been reported that the AAP has previously provided backing for Tipper Gore's 1985 Senate Rock Hearings. Cook continued, "Research to date indicates that interactive media have an even more potent lasting effect on violent behavior than passive media forms like television and movies. Several studies have shown that after playing violent video games, children and adolescents become desensitized to violence, have increased levels of aggressive thoughts and behavior, and act hostile toward others." Not one specific study was cited within Mr. Cook's entire testimony. Not only have the powers that be trampled upon First Amendment rights, they have allowed themselves to be influenced by so called experts who claim to have solutions to the increasing "problems" America's youth create.

Although Jack Valenti, chief lobbyist for the movie studios, did testify, Senator McCain became visibly upset that the majority of movie studio representatives declined to appear for the hearing: "Their hubris is stunning and serves to underscore

the lack of corporate responsibility so striking in this report," said Mr. McCain. Mr. Valenti retorted that Congress "should feel an immense pride in this unique American creative asset and the daily contributions of the movie and television industry to this nation's art and commerce and the endurance of its responsibility to American parents." Senator McCain scheduled another hearing for September 27th, where the previously absent movie studio representatives are expected to testify.

Hilary Rosen, CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), once again sold out music fans and submitted to pressure from would-be censors. During her testimony she stated "Today, as the issue finds itself back on the front pages again, we are proud to speak with you just as authoritatively and every bit as passionately as we have for each of the last 15 years." I find this incredibly hypocritical, because the RIAA submissively dropped to its knees and allowed Tipper Gore's Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) to go ahead and blacklist allegedly obscene music 15 years ago. Because of the RIAA's passivity, states continue to introduce bills which attempt to criminalize the sale of albums with Tipper Gore's Parental Advisory stickers to consumers under the age of 18, with stiff fines being imposed on retailers found guilty of selling allegedly offensive albums. One clear example is the recent Tennessee 21st Century Media Market Responsibility Act, which is currently seeking approval in Tipper's own backyard. Both she and her husband Al Gore have remained silent regarding this highly controversial bill, which requires that all "Manufacturers, producers, sellers and any other providers to the public of interactive video game products and services, video program products, motion picture products, and sound recordings submit to the Joint Committee on Children and Youth of Tennessee General Assembly and the Department of Children's Services a joint proposal for a system for labeling the violent content in interactive video game products and services, video program products, motion picture products, and sound recording products." Representative Dewayne Bunch (Republican-Tennessee) and Senator Jeff Miller (Tennessee) have already sponsored this bill, and Child Protective Services were slated to carry out the dirty work for them. It's the function of Child Protective Services to make certain that abused children won't go through horrific ordeals such as sexual abuse, not to take valuable time away from their duties to monitor the content of music and video games!

Rosen did attack the Federal Trade Commission's recent report on violence marketed to children: "From what I can tell, the FTC's findings can be summed up in few sentences. Parents are satisfied with the industry's rating systems to the extent that 74% said so, but the FTC is not. The majority of CD's that carried the sticker were also available in edited form. As far as I can tell, there was one - I repeat, one specific incident of a television program where this music was advertised with a majority under 17 years of age audience and three more that were questionable. Hardly a sweeping industry condemnation." Rosen may have testified, but judging by her previously passive actions in the face of similar attacks on free expression she will probably once again appease the powers that be.

Senator John McCain appeared on ABC's "This Week" to discuss the September 13th meeting. "I'm reluctant right now to say I'm ready to pass some kind of law that imposes some sort of censorship on the industry." Rock Out Censorship's Kenny Moore blasted Senator McCain and Senator Lieberman for their deplorable behavior and their hostility toward the First Amendment. "McCain and Lieberman publicly soothe the fears of a freedom loving public with statements of opposition to legislation that would threaten the First Amendment, while all the while they are the most active members of Congress working feverishly to turn the Constitution into toilet paper under the guise of 'protecting the children.' They are the embodiment of hypocrisy and are a very serious threat to the supposedly free people they were elected to serve."

Mr. McCain is all too eager to erase his name from the circus he has created. How can McCain look in the mirror and say that he's not ready to impose censorship, when he himself sponsored Senate Bill 2497 on May 2nd. This bill attempts to criminalize the sale of labeled material to minors through the strict imposition of fines. Any retailer caught selling the blacklisted material will be fined up to \$10,000 per violation! If this labeling system is implemented, full descriptions of all acts of violence depicted within the product must and "shall specify a minimum age in years for the purchase, viewing, listening to, use, or other consumption of the product or service in light of the totality of all depiction of violence in the product or service." The descriptions for the "highly obscene" material in question would read longer than any government warning for tobacco or alcohol, both of which have more far-reaching consequences than listening to a

record or playing a video game!

The president of Artemis Records, Danny Goldberg, defended free expression by arguing that "In a free society, what do you do about it?" Goldberg continued by suggesting that perhaps one reason why young people were indifferent to politics was that "politicians and academics who obviously have no real understanding of their culture make sweeping generalizations about their entertainment. They are not represented here today, there are no music fans." I wholeheartedly agree. There has been all too much talk about "protecting kids" and the "corruption of America's children", but the kids haven't been given a chance or a forum to voice their concerns and convictions, which is one reason why music plays such an important role in the lives of young, passionate, music fans. Music encourages freedom of expression, something too many people have been seeking to limit. As Brooklyn resident Marya Grupsmith, 15, argued in the *New York Times* (in reference to the Littleton tragedy and the recent debates regarding video games), "People focused on the kids in Columbine using violent video games, [when] they should have focused more on the guns in the rooms, and the disturbed behavior." Ms. Fernandez also voiced her concerns to the *Times* about actual violence. "...the cops will throw someone against a wall, [but] they don't care that there's children watching, someday it might be my son," said Fernandez.

Officials are constantly attempting to ban violent media, but little has been done, for example, to implement police precinct review, which would properly inform citizens as to how officers are conducting themselves. Since police brutality cases are increasingly making headlines, we should not be devoting so much attention to trivial matters. Officials are focusing too much on fictional violence, and are unwisely ignoring the actual violence that occurs daily on our streets. The skewed logic of "once violent media is banned, actual violence in society will decrease" will only be detrimental to society, because the real issues that affect America's younger generation are rarely being addressed.

Constitutional support for free expression is what distinguishes America from other nations. If the government or lobbying groups try to limit such constitutionally-protected expression, another passive, blank generation will arise tomorrow. If they trample the First Amendment until it is ripped to shreds, and continue to spit upon our forefathers who sought to provide us with these protections, I consider it to be a virtual declaration of war!

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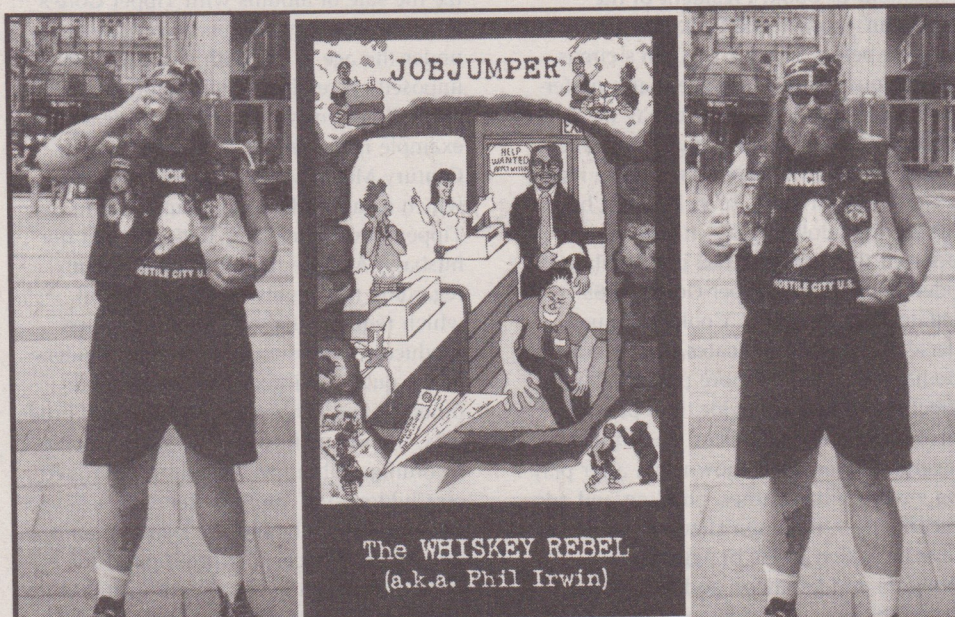
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Jeff Alexander is an Incident Update writer for Rock Out Censorship. ROC dedicates itself to preserving the First Amendment. Please visit www.theroc.org and www.roc-news.com for legislative alerts, incidents, and merchandise.



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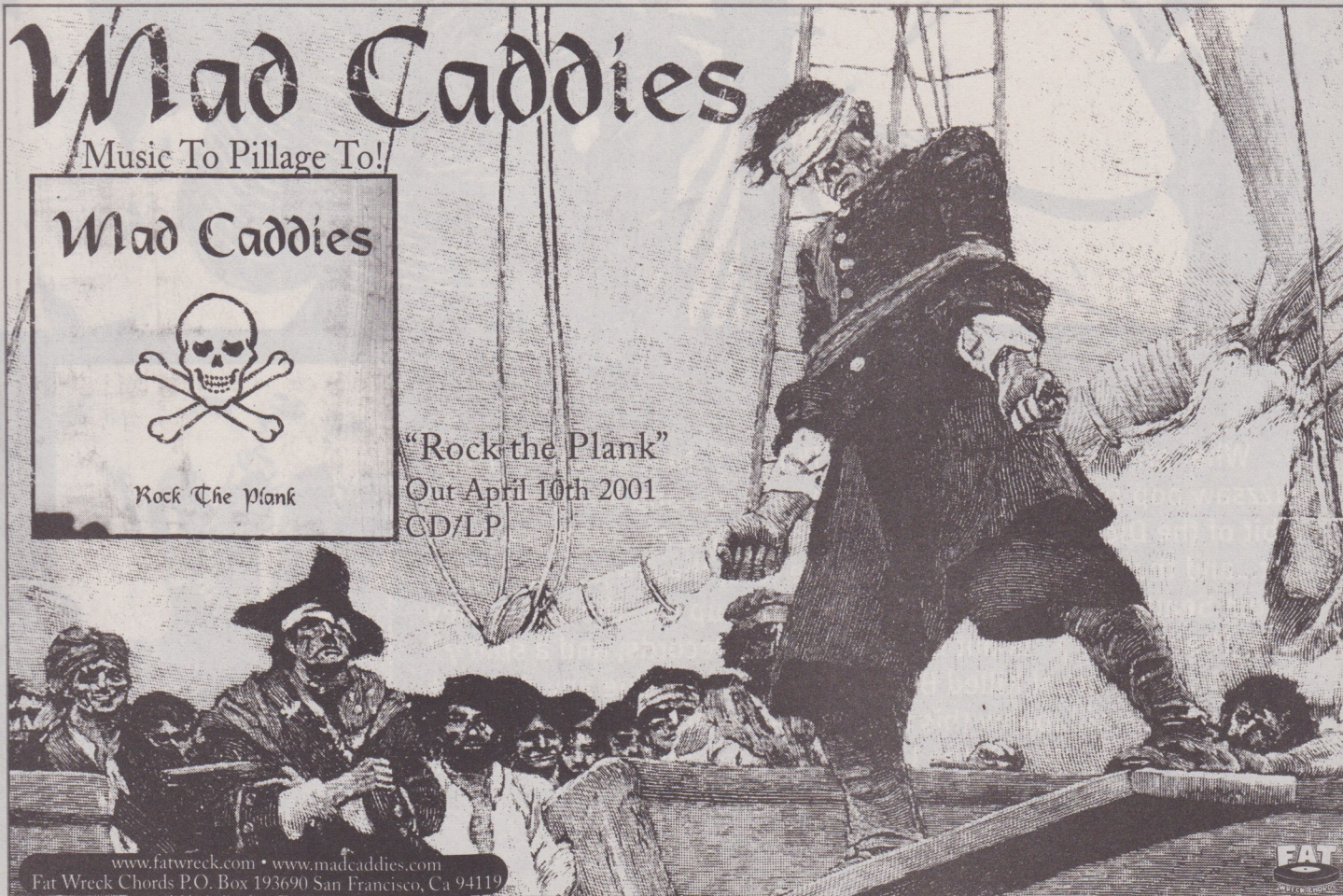
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the briefs



Interviewed by Brian La Manna, transcribed by Jill Trueblood

What are the Briefs??? Pop??? Punk??? New Wave??? Think buzzsaw pop-punk a la the Undertones, Boys, and Ramones...add a bit of the Dickies and Weirdos...throw in spazziness of the Devo sort...and that's their sound. If truth be told, they're just four guys from Seattle playing the music they grew up on...the music they love. Their debut 7" is out now on Dirtnap Records, and a split 7" with the Spits (local Killed By Synth punkers) is due any day. The Dirtnap LP will follow this fall. I talked with them over beers at Briefs HQ, the Lava Lounge, on 2nd Ave in Seattle...



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BL: OK, names, what you do in the band, and what was the last record you bought?

Daniel J. Trevanti: I play guitar and sing. The last record I bought was the Drones...it's a re-issue on Get Back. **Lance Romance:** Vocals and bass. Last record? The La Peste LP. **Steve E. Nix:** I play guitar and sing. The last albums I bought simultaneously were the Big Boys' The Skinny Elvis and the Big Boys' The Fat Elvis. **Chris Brief:** I play drums and sing. The last record I got was Devo's *Are We Not Men?*

BL: I was talking to Steve earlier about how some of you guys have been in bands together before the Briefs (the Ya-Ya's and the Pin-ups), but how did this band come together?

Dan: Lance and I would play records here on Wednesdays...we'd play old punk stuff.

Lance: Chris would come in a lot and lurk around and critique us. Finally, he came up and asked us to play an old SST band.

Chris: It was Fate, Saccharine Trust.

Dan: We talked to Chris and found out that he played drums. Lance and I had this idea — just for fun — to get together and try to play this stuff that we've always wanted to play: really simple, old punk rock. Hearing all that music and stuff, you just start to dream. Chris was into that. He came down and then, I don't know...

Steve: I'd been laying low in Tacoma. I moved to Seattle and was itching to play with anybody who would take me, and these guys did.

Chris: Steve jogged down! We were down in the practice space and he jogged in real fast, picked up his guitar, played, and then took off.

Lance: I think he had a headband on.

BL: A little more background...how did you guys get into punk rock?

Dan: I was probably about 13 and I'd moved out to Tacoma from Kansas. I was disaffected and didn't really fit in, so it seemed like a natural progression to get into stuff like Devo. I guess I was into the Cars and some of the early New Wave stuff. Pretty quickly after that, probably the same summer, somebody gave me a Black Flag tape...it was *Damaged*, early stuff, I think...

BL: The good years.

Dan: Yeah, it was good. I mean it scared me, it was just so damn fast. Since then I've skated and dyed my hair, although I've since quit skating.

Chris: I guess I was probably 12. It was the summer after fifth grade. I started skating, and I think that's pretty much what got me into it.

Lance: What, like in '95?

Chris: That was like '98-'99...no it was actually '87-'88. The first punk rock song I ever heard was off of "Wheels of Fire," the first Santa Cruz movie. I think it was all SST stuff.

Lance: "Wheels of Fire?" Isn't that a Lynyrd Skynyrd record?

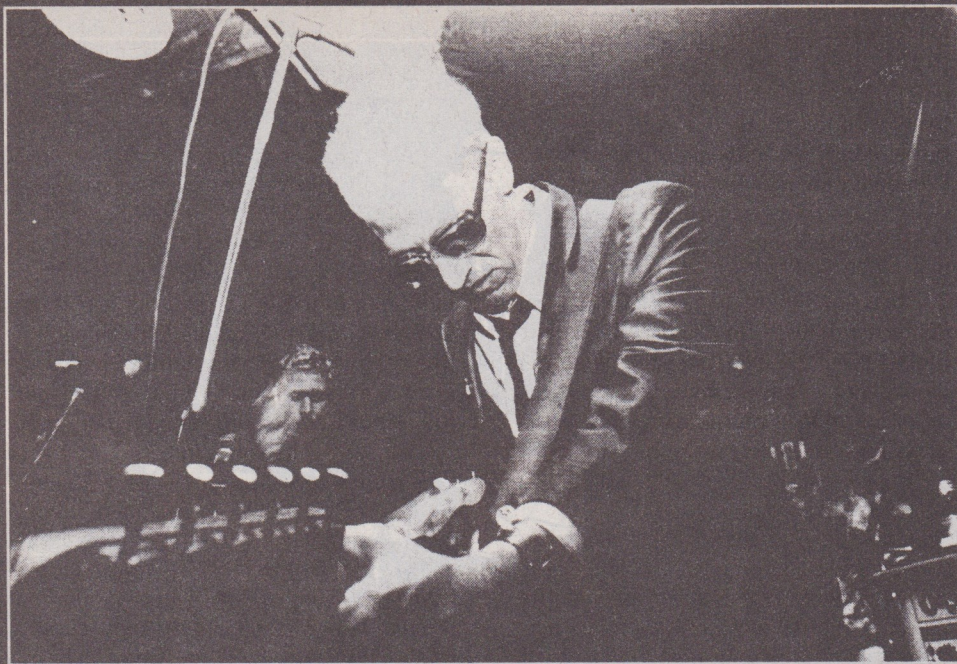
Chris: Might have been "Streets of Fire." It had Natas go up and do thespins on the

fire hydrant.

Steve: I started playing in bands in the ninth grade. I was in a cover band. I just wanted to play with people, but they eventually kicked me out because I couldn't do the wailing solos well enough. At that time, friends of mine were turning me on to punk rock. Actually, I didn't like it at first 'cause the first thing I heard was the Meatmen (it actually grew on me), but I started listening to Social Distortion and Black Flag. A lot of that early Southern California stuff really hooked me, so I got kicked out of the cover band and I promptly joined a band called the Really Rottens that played punk rock.

Lance: I remember when I was a kid, I saw this TV show — Dan has it on tape. I remember it was an NBC special on punk rock in London, and it was really weird because they showed people pulling hair, mainly the Sex Pistols. I was into Van Halen, but then I saw Devo on "Saturday Night Live" and that freaked me out a little bit. I started listening to the Cars' first record, Joe Jackson, and the Clash's first record. The group that I was hanging out with were into AC/DC and Van Halen. We were hanging out at this old skate shop in Seattle called Right On, and they would always have the Sex Pistols and the Clash going...and from then on...

BL: I do notice that Chris has a Los Crudos patch on his pants. You seem to have a bit of a hardcore influence, and I don't mean that as a slag. I grew up on Black Flag, the Dead Kennedys, and



Minor Threat.

Chris: Actually, the last record that I bought — I know I said Devo — is this compilation that just came out of NW hardcore bands. I can't think of what it's called.

Lance: Actually, his influences are really cool because the rest of us are pretty much on the same level as far as influences. We've turned him on to stuff and he's tried to turn us on to some stuff that we really don't know. It's really good 'cause I think it also adds some of that skate rock element. There's definitely some of that, and it comes from him.

BL: Well, I mean, watching him as a drummer, I definitely think he gives you guys a bit of an edge. I know a lot of people say you guys sound like the Vibrators or the Boys, but I think that "edge" is more reminiscent of the Dickies or WeirDOS...West Coast bands that were influenced by the Limey bands, but played faster.

Lance: That's fair 'cause I think that, while there are a lot of Ramones' style melodies and poppy elements...

BL: There's that early hardcore energy in there.

Lance: Yeah.

BL: Dan and I were talking at the Crocodile one night about your cover of "Neutron Bomb" by the WeirDOS, and he mentioned a band he'd been in with Nicky Beat (the WeirDOS' drummer).

Dan: Lance and I both were...I don't know how we met Nikki. I mean, the guy is just a piece of work. I'd love to find him again, but I don't know where he is.

Lance: It was really funny because the band wasn't that great. It was just Dan and I being excited to be in a band with Nikki.

Dan: But he wouldn't talk about the WeirDOS. We always tried to get him to do WeirDOS' stuff.

BL: Moving on, the debut record is finally out...the 7" on Cut and Run produced by Kurt Bloch at Egg. Were you guys happy with it?

Steve: It's actually on Dirtnap...

Lance: We need to clarify that 'cause everything has been kind of skewed by that.

BL: So the 7" is actually on Dirtnap (mine says Cut and Run...a future rarity???). I was under the impression that Cut and Run was going to do the 7" and LP. What went down with that?

Dan: Nothing really horrible. Cut and Run was just one guy and he had the best intentions to help us out and we thought that it seemed like a really nice marriage. We just wanted somebody to put it out and we didn't have enough money to do it. He gave us the money and then I think he realized he was in a little over his head, so Ken at Dirtnap was kind enough to take it over.

Chris: Well, we had the whole LP recorded and ready to go, and when stuff went down with Cut and Run we'd already been talking to Dirtnap about doing a split with the Spits. So we just went to Ken and

"I just freaked

asked if he wanted to do the full-length. So that's what's going to happen.

BL: And it'll be out...

Chris: The LP will be out in September, 13 songs in 27 minutes. We were trying to match Back From Samoa.

Dan: That has 14 songs.

Steve: Our songs aren't really short hardcore, though...

BL: How did you hook up with the Spits for the split?

Chris: They paid us money.

BL: I'd believe that!

Lance: No, they held a gun to our head.

Dan: I think we just got lucky.

Chris: We did our very first show with the Spits.

Dan: I thought, "This is sort of like the Ramones, but weirder!"

Lance: They had a fog machine in the house, and they played way too long...they were great.

BL: I don't think America is ready for the brilliance that is the Spits. The first time I saw them, I thought they were going to be hardcore, but they sounded like a cross between the Ramones, the Modern Lovers, and Devo. During their set, some girl kicked me in the head by accident — just this leg coming out of the fog — but I didn't care because the Spits were so much fun. The world just isn't ready for them, though...

Steve: I think it is!

out and went into the garage and grabbed my dad's can of Black Flag and I sprayed it on my crotch."



BL: So, does everyone write the songs? I get the impression you all write, because you all sing.

Lance: We have ghostwriters.

Chris: Everyone puts in their own piece, but most of the songs are brought in by people other than me. I tried to write a song before, but whenever I do they break out the drummer jokes.

Lance: When we first started, there was this sense of urgency and energy that we all had bottled up. It was cool, because none of us had ever sung before.

BL: Steve, I know you're sick of this, but what's the story behind the song "New Case?"

Steve: "New Case" is about getting crabs when I was 17. I was too embarrassed to tell my folks or friends. I lived with them for a few days and tried to wash them off in the shower with hot water and it didn't work. Finally, I just freaked out and went into the garage and grabbed my dad's can of Black Flag and I sprayed it on my crotch.

BL: Black Flag?

Steve: Yeah.

BL: You're sooo punk rock!!!

Steve: It killed the fuckers, but it really irritated my skin. I didn't know you could go to the drugstore and buy stuff.

Dan: Well, that would have been like buying porno or something.

Steve: It was scary. Fortunately, it hasn't happened again.

Lance: That song kind of freaked Chris out when we first started playing it.

Chris: Yeah, that was the first song Steve brought to practice, and I didn't know him since I hadn't met him before. I'd just met Steve, and then he started singing about how he had crabs!

Lance: I think the phrase "he's weird" was used after Steve left.

BL: I think it's great. Hell, the Undertones open up their first album with a song about incest. Who is "Where Did He Go?" about? I've been trying to figure that out 'cause I can't make out the lyrics live.

Lance: I don't know.

Dan: Actually, it's about different people at different times.

Chris: There was a movie based on ...

Lance: I don't know...we can't talk about that.

(Note: After listening to the recorded version of the song and hearing the lyrics, I was still a bit perplexed. A few weeks later, Chris told me it was about Jimmy Hoffa. Duh!)

Lance: It's weird. It seems that we have music and just make shit up and then try to come up with a good melody and words. Like today, I was trying to write songs and words. I think with me, it's more about words that sound good. It's really hard to come up with topics. We've been talking about it, and I've been thinking about it more lately. But good songs have really mundane topics, sometimes.

Chris: All our songs have a theme. We all have a topic that we stick to, I think. Dan's

are all about weird meats and people.

Steve's are always about weird shit, like "talking to a donkey staring at the wall." Lance's are about his family. And mine always seem to be about girls.

Dan: I don't know what he's talking about...meat? "Rotten Love" is not about meat!

BL: Well, I was thinking, especially with "New Case," that it's a true story and I like songs like that. It's a bizarre kind of thing, but it's true and I appreciate songs like that. 'Cause it's something that's about real life, but you can get a good laugh out of it and you can make a good song out of it. So it was a good experience in the end.

Dan: He's had a few years to look back on it and smile.

BL: You guys have good taste in cover songs. I still haven't seen you friggin' do "Pillbox", but I've heard rumors that you do it.

Steve: "Pillbox" is hard, so we only did it once.

Lance: We've got a Nuns cover, "World War III."

Chris: We haven't actually played it yet. Lance: We're trying to get so many covers, I think, just to have them. But we don't want to be known as the band that does that Weirdos' song all the time.

BL: I don't think you guys need to worry about that.

Lance: No one really knows it's a Weirdos' song. Only two people knew. I was



"I like seeing doing what

surprised, 'cause I thought more people would know. You knew right away.

Dan: People who know it were right there with you, you know...(singing) "We got da neutron bomb"... no matter how poorly we play it, they're singing it right there with us.

Lance: Maybe we're just not playing it good enough...

BL: You play it fine. Moving on, you guys have the late 70's look/style down. You guys dress up, you've got the suit jackets, sunglasses, badges, bleached and spiky hair. It's not superficial, though, since you care about the songwriting, the live show. What I'm trying to get at is...you know, a lot of bands right now just do the t-shirt and jeans thing. They look like they just got off work, whereas you guys actually put some effort into it. What do you think about that?

Steve: It's entertaining, it's fun...not that it's better or worse than any other way of presenting a band. But for us, we like looking at record covers where the band looks cool. It's something to look at, it's a little different or sharp.

Dan: I remember being a little kid and looking at those pictures and then going to a concert and seeing those guys that just looked so great to me. It was very exciting.

Chris: I remember, I wanted to see that when I was getting into punk rock, and then I'd go see a show and I'd see band members and lots of 'em would be just kind of boring, kind of normal looking. I was always a little bummed out by that, but they were still great shows.

Steve: I mean, the Dickies wouldn't be the Dickies unless they looked like the Dickies,

and that's...you know...

Dan: Words of wisdom there!!!

Lance: People tend to forget that you're performing and there's nothing wrong with taking it the extra step. It might seem pretentious or cheesy, but what the fuck. I mean, we do it for half an hour and we're not afraid to admit it. We definitely talk about it and try to make it...

Dan: We all talk like little schoolgirls, "What are you wearing tonight?"

Chris: If you go to see a show, you want to see a show. Otherwise you might as well just listen to the record.

BL: Live rock 'n' roll is entertainment. Most people forget that.

Chris: The stuff that we wear is stuff that we've either owned forever!

BL: Like the nuns' habits?

All: (laughter)

BL: We were talking about the Seattle scene during our beer break. Right now, there are a lot of bands in town that are doing the Stooges/Dead Boys thing. You guys are somewhat apart from that, but you still fit in the scene.

Steve: Yeah, you know, it's weird. A lot of people in those bands seem to like us, and we do a lot of shows with those bands. There's now a whole slew of bands that are all compatible with each other and can play together. We can bring up the Spits again, with their keyboard, or the Stuck-ups. Then you've got the Vaccines, who remind me of Tales Of Terror. Or the Vultures, who are

very cool, a total Real Kids thing.

BL: Yeah, the Vultures have that Real Kids sound. I love them!

Steve: There's a whole bunch of different sounding bands. It's great when they're still representing all the different factions...the Murder City Devils...the Makers...the Makers are very cool with their new twist.

BL: The new Makers' LP is very daring.

Dan: It takes courage to put that out.

Steve: I like seeing bands doing what they're passionate about. That's really the bottom line. If it's punk-related, all the better, 'cause that's what I like.

Dan: That whole "punk" label is giving people the freedom to do whatever they want to do for a change, instead of being confined into one specific sound. I think the scene around here is really cool. It's so great to see people in other bands that you're playing with up there supporting you, instead of just waiting for their time to go on and then playing.

Chris: That's the way it should be.

Lance: We're actually making an effort to get to shows early if we can. It creates this boundary, it seems to me, if you just show up ten minutes before you go on and you're not really interested in anyone else. You know what I mean?

BL: You're not there seeing the new bands that are really good, and so people are gonna miss out on them.

Lance: Yeah.

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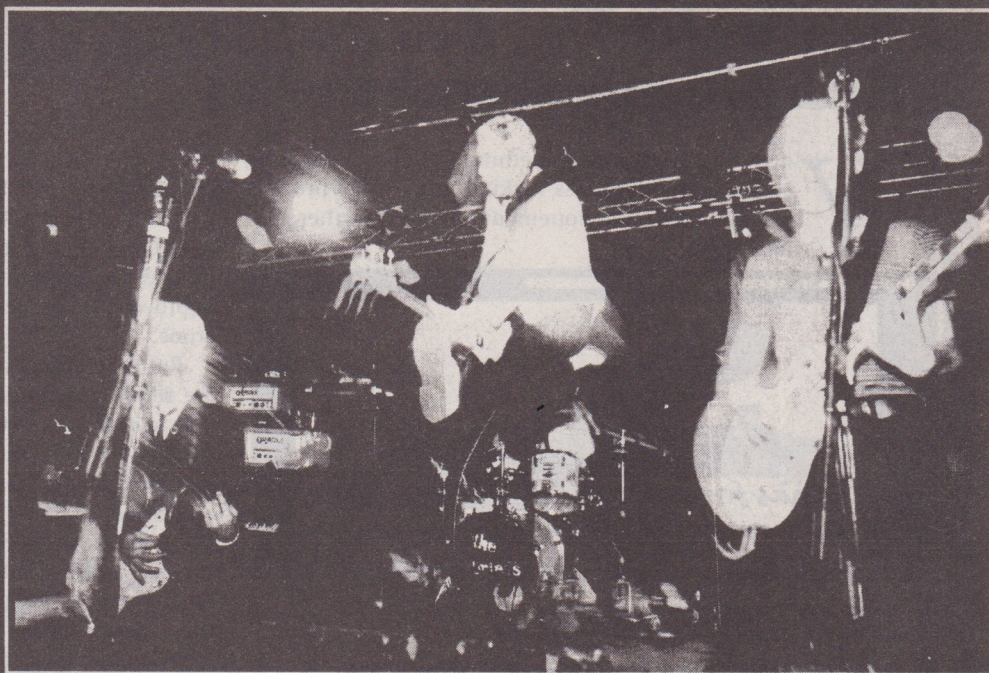
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bands they're passionate about."



BL: We talked about the local scene, but are there any contemporary bands that aren't local that you're really stoked on right now? What's the contemporary stuff that you guys are really crazy about?

Chris: Kid Dynamite's new record.

Lance: The new Elastica.

Chris: Scared of Chaka is great.

BL: Did you ever play with the Stitches when you were down in LA?

Dan: That's a band that I keep hearing about...

BL: Because you guys would mesh really well on a bill with them. There's also a band from Wisconsin called Boris the Sprinkler that are very similar to you guys...kind of like the Rezillos and Dickies.

Steve: I like the Stitches...I saw them.

Lance: I have to listen to Top 40 shit at my house with my kids. I really get sick of all that stuff.

Chris: But they still love the Briefs the best.

Lance: Yeah they do, but that fucking Eminem!!!

BL: What about touring?

Lance: The (West Coast) tour was really good for me. I think every band needs to get in the van for more than a week, which was all we had, just to kind of feel it out...to see if you can do it. I think its like a bad psychological experiment.

Chris: We drove 12 hours straight to SF

and pretty much got there and played. That show was fun, but I think we were a little drained at that point. But by the time of our last show, we were ready for another two weeks.

Steve: I wouldn't even count it as a tour, just a little jaunt up the coast.

Lance: Yeah, it didn't get to the point where we had to hide the jerk-off towel.

BL: Is there anybody that doesn't like being in the van that much?

Chris: Dan doesn't like to pump gas and Steve doesn't know how to pump gas.

BL: When's the next tour?

Dan: Hopefully in September, to coincide with the record. That's what we're shooting for.

Chris: Late August or early September.

BL: The whole US?

Dan: I would love to tour the full US, but I bet we can't.

BL: What do you guys do when you're not the Briefs?

Lance: I'm a family man. I like to sleep in, take lots of naps, work on my house, mow the lawn...no, I'm a photographer, so that's my day job, so to speak, when I want it to be. I'm self-employed. Hey, what do you call four guys with paintbrushes?

All: What?

Lance: A band.

Chris: Besides being Lance's oldest son, I work in the art department at

Phatagraphics.

Steve: I work in a screen printing shop. It's cool 'cause I can listen to loud music, but it doesn't pay much.

Chris: Dan paints.

BL: Contact Info?

All: www.thebriefs.com

BL: Final words?

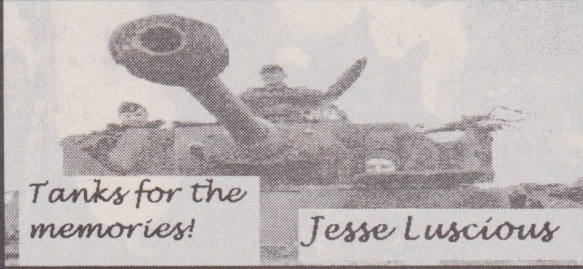
Lance: Go Spits!!!

Steve: I'd love to see the return of skate rock, minus the baggy pants. There's something about a band playing near a ramp. I don't skate that much anymore, because I always drop my cigarette.

BL: On that note...THE END

"I'd love to
see the
return of
skate rock,
minus the
baggy
pants."

Yo, how's it going? Something serious, something stupid, something ass-kicking, plus some product placement for a denouement. Without further ado, let's rock...



Tanks for the memories!

Jesse Luscious

STATE SPONSORED SLAUGHTER? I DON'T EVEN KNOW HER!

Reason #1 to be against the death penalty: Robert Massie, a double murderer, said he was pressing to be executed to avoid a "lingering death by life imprisonment."

Hear that, all you eye-for-an-eye folks? A big bad killer wants the state to kill him because he fears having to contemplate (and hopefully understand the full enormity of his crimes) for the rest of his natural life. For him, being killed is easier than living. He's a coward, he's looking for an out, and the bloodthirsty state of California will give it to him, probably by the time this issue hits the streets.

Like any anti-death penalty advocate, I know that there are scumbags who should never be allowed to go free because they've committed heinous crimes. Some people should never be allowed out of prison and should instead just be punished by being stripped of their freedom of movement, of any life outside of concrete walls and barbed wire, and of their ability to kill themselves to escape their imprisonment. Officially, it's called "Life Without Possibility of Parole."

While the current all-solitary Supermax prisons are sadistic, cruel, and unusual, there is definitely a place for solitary confinement for some of the prison population for a certain period of time. But when lifers go crazy because of being in solitary, isn't that not only cruel and unusual punishment but also counterproductive? Murderers should be forced to stay sane enough to fully and finally comprehend the enormity of butchering other human beings.

Don't get me wrong, I strongly believe that most inmates should be able to rehabilitate their lives so that when they are released they don't return immediately to prison. It's insane to punish and dehumanize fellow humans for a period of years, provide little or no opportunity for counseling, education, dispute resolution training, or any other life-changing activities, and then be surprised when an ex-con fucks up and returns (usually with time for parole violations added on to their new sentence) within a year or two. It's like throwing a sealed sack full of puppies into a river and not understanding why they don't swim to shore.

After all, the Quakers, who were pretty darn liberal even in the 18th Century, pioneered the use of prisons as places of rehabilitation for criminals, which was a stunning idea at the time. Rehabilitation

mixed with the most basic punishment of all, loss of freedom, is what drove our correctional system until comparatively recently, until Reagan's "War On Drugs" to be exact. The system was far from perfect, but until the rise to power of the hard right in the 1980's, inmates had access to education, libraries, and other opportunities to improve their existences in order to escape (cliché alert!) a life of crime.

But to return to a smaller group of prisoners, namely people who are serial rapists and murderers, there are some who shouldn't be able to ever walk free again. Judging from the quote at the top of this column, for them life in prison is a greater punishment than getting murdered by the State.

Reason #2 to be against the death penalty: innocent people are being killed by the State. With my (and your) money and resources. Illinois' recent death house moratorium is a perfect example. But what would've happened if those law students hadn't re-examined those death penalty cases? Eleven innocent people would be dead today, at the hands of the Illinois Department of Corrections.

According to the ACLU, since 1976 1 out of 8 people condemned to death have turned out to be innocent. What happens to the unfortunate among the other 88% of death row inhabitants whose cases have never been re-examined by competent lawyers or investigators who are not beholden to prosecutors? Statistically, there are some innocent people who've been killed or are going to be killed because politicians have embraced the outdated Biblical notion of an eye for an eye.

The whole structure of the death penalty is inhumane. For a country that is constantly yammering on about "democracy" and "justice," we certainly kill a lot of minors, mentally retarded people, and a statistically unlikely number of racial minorities. Most state structures are extremely resistant to any re-opening of death penalty cases, even when clear miscarriages of justice, like coerced confessions, jailhouse informants looking for lighter sentences, and sleeping defense lawyers, are daily occurring in my name and your name.

During the last presidential election, the bloodthirsty bureaucracy masquerading as the Texas Justice System was revealed to be extremely resistant to any appearance of clemency for death row inmates. Texas has executed foreigners in violation of the Geneva Convention (!!!) as well as minors and retarded people. Not to insult the mentally challenged, but Dubya's killing his own kind.

This January, Oklahoma jumped ahead of Texas, killing 8 people in 30 days, including one retarded black woman, racking up bonus points for hitting a two-fer: a racial minority and a half-wit! Since the woman's lesbianism was mentioned in a discriminatory manner during her trial (in which she was represented by a state-appointed lawyer who was paid a total of \$800 for defending her, in his first ever capital case), the jury may have given her the juice for being a sexual minority as well. Texas is no doubt planning to kill a gay Mexican, twelve-year old Mongoloid later this year in order to recapture its title of deadliest state.

The United States is one of an elite group of nations which still slaughters its own citizens. You've heard about those other shining examples of judicial fairness: China, the Russian Federation, Afghanistan, Congo, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Cuba. In fact, the only "industrialized countries" among the 37 countries world-wide that still run a judicial state-execution are Taiwan, Japan, China, Russia, and the U.S. However, 85% of all world-wide judicial executions in 1999 (which were the latest stats I could find) were in China (1,077), Iran (165), Saudi Arabia (103), Congo (100), and the U.S. (98).

Unfortunately we have to share the honor of being the only coun-

try in 1999 to execute a minor with Iran- talk about good company, huh?

Study after study shows that using the death penalty as a deterrent doesn't work. Think about it, if someone's pissed off, drunk enough, or high enough to want to kill someone on the spur of the moment, s/he is not going to stop his/her homicidal rage to consider the ramifications of murdering someone else. The definition of a "crime of passion" is that it is explicitly NOT driven by the intellect.

And as for murderers who plot their crimes out meticulously ahead of time, deterrence isn't applicable because, like any sane law-breaker, they don't plan to get caught: The fact that their intended crime carries a possibility of death is moot, since they believe that they won't be tried for it.

The final pro-death argument I'll cover is the toughest one, since it depends on empathy instead of vengeance: killing murderers brings "closure" to murdered people's families. This used to be called the "eye for an eye" theory, but death penalty advocates dropped that when it was pointed out that other biblical criminal justice traditions like mutilation and stoning for adultery or false-idol worship are only carried out in truly medieval countries like Afghanistan. "Closure" is a lot more delicate theory to deflate for those of us who have never (and hopefully will never) become relatives of murder victims. So here's a quote from Marie Deans, founder of Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation:

"After a murder, victims' families face two things: a death and a crime. At these times, families need help to cope with their grief and loss, and support to heal their hearts and rebuild their lives. From experience, we know that revenge is not the answer. The answer lies in reducing violence, not causing more death. The answer lies in

JESSELUSCIOUS

supporting those who grieve for their lost loved ones, not creating more grieving families. It is time we break the cycle of violence. To those who say society must take a life for a life, we say: 'not in our name'."

With that, I'm jumping off my soapbox for today. Here's where I got the info above:

American Civil Liberties Union, 1400 20th St., NW, Suite 119, Washington, DC 20036

phone: (202) 457-0800, www.aclu.org

Death Penalty Information Center, 1320 18th Street NW, 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20036

phone: (202) 293-6970, fax: (202) 822-4787, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation, 2161 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140

phone: (617) 868-0007, fax: (617) 354-2832, www.mvfr.org

YOU MUST BE SPONTANEOUS, YOU MUST BE ZANY... OR ELSE!

A few weeks back at Gilman Street here in Berkeley I got accosted by some douchebag who wanted me to be wacky against my will- and my will is the only thing that saved the kid from a fat lip. This kid also happened to be one of the least savvy smelly

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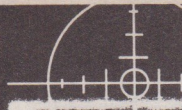


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HIT SQUAD



dreadlocked warriors I've ever met, and unfortunately I've met more than my share. Without burdening you with the details of his actions, I'll instead relate our conversation after the scuffle:

Me: "You are lucky I work here, otherwise I would've pounded you. What's your problem?"

Smelly: "I was just being zany, why don't you want to be zany?" [And yes, that's a direct quote]

Me: "I don't have to explain to you why I don't want you to make me do something I don't want to do."

Smelly: "I didn't know you didn't like that. I don't even know you."

Me: "Exactly dude, you... don't... even... know... me."

Smelly: "Uhhhh."

I continued to waste common sense on this guy, even though I had bled more than he did (fucking spikes in his leather jacket, when will I learn?) before giving up. Apology? No, I was too uptight to deserve one. Unfortunately, he was being egged on by my old BLATZ band-mate Eggplant, so now I'm paying for the sins of my youth — "Fuk Shit Up, dude." The guy did grudgingly apologize the next day, but he still didn't understand why I didn't just lighten up. Hey dude, people have things called happy moods, angry moods, bored moods, and yes, even zany moods — just because you're feelin' frisky doesn't mean that everyone else around you is...goddamn kids, where's my geritol? No wonder Brett wanted me to write for *Hit List*!

KICKIN' ASS:

... and takin' names this month include: THE BRIEFS "Hit after Hit" (Dirtnap), THE DONNAS "Turn 21" (Lookout), UPPER CRUST "Entitled" (Reptilian), RANCID 2nd self-titled release (Hellcat), ZEKE "True Crime" (Dropkick), EMINEM "The Marshall Mathers LP" (Interscope), PLUS ONES "On the List" (Coldfront), INFLUENTS "Check Please" (Adeline), STOMPIN' TOM CONNORS "Souvenirs" (EMI Canada), ROSE TATTOO "Scarred For Life" (Atlantic). Buy the EMINEM used if you don't wanna give him \$ directly, it's a great record. I'm cutting this list off here, otherwise it'd never end. People who say that there ain't no good music around anymore aren't looking hard enough — only the last release came out before 1998 (1982 to be exact), most of the rest are from 2000 or 2001, and THE BRIEFS is an early contender for punk record of the year...

BITS:

Neat election tidbit from before November 7th:

When pollsters asked Nader voters who they would vote for if Nader wasn't run-

ning, 20% said Pat Buchanan, 15% said George W. Bush, and another 20% or so going for Nobody for President. The neat thing is that this shows how the people outside of the moderate center often overlap: Buchanan has been fighting against NAFTA and WTO as long if not longer than Nader, and the bald reality is that, save for pockets of upwardly-mobile white-collar folks, the rest of us are stagnant or trapped in the exciting world of the exploding service sector. Buchanan's a creep who'd make Jello Biafra's worst nightmares about Ronald Reagan look like a Howard Zinn lecture, but he, like everyone on the Left, is speaking to the folks who are left behind. That is, of course, the folks left behind who are still listening: the majority of people down here don't bother to vote at all...

It's kinda funny that there are so many Coldfront Records ads in this mag — you'd think the guy was a co-owner or something...Haven't seen his new band yet, but I heard it's a requirement before I can turn in another column!

Speaking of product placement, our new band THE FRISK is playing occasional shows and recording a 12" EP/CD EP for Adeline Records out late summer. Our old band THE CRIMINALS released our final record, "Extinct," on F.O.A.D. Records a couple of weeks ago. For more details, check out <http://home.mind-spring.com/~jt02/index.html>

Insert clichéd 'punk' sign-off here,
Jesse Luscious +

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- 5/01 Albuquerque, NM @ Insurgo
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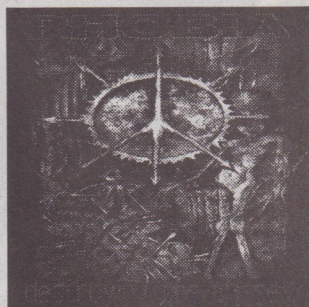
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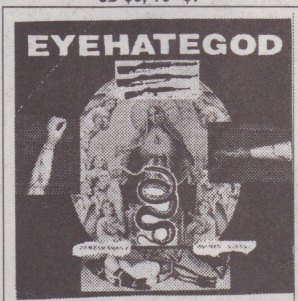
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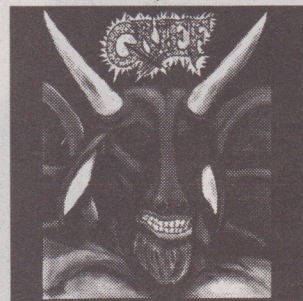
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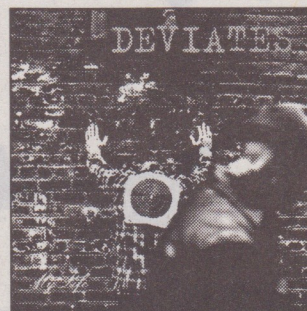
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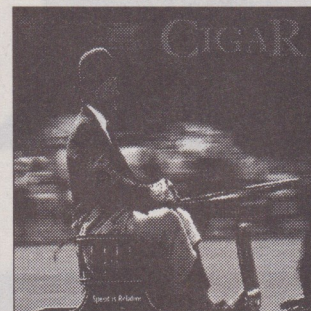
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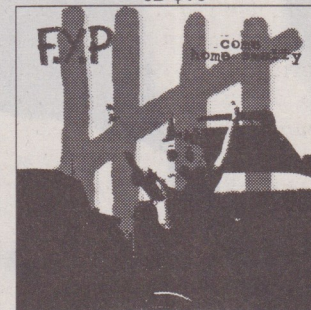
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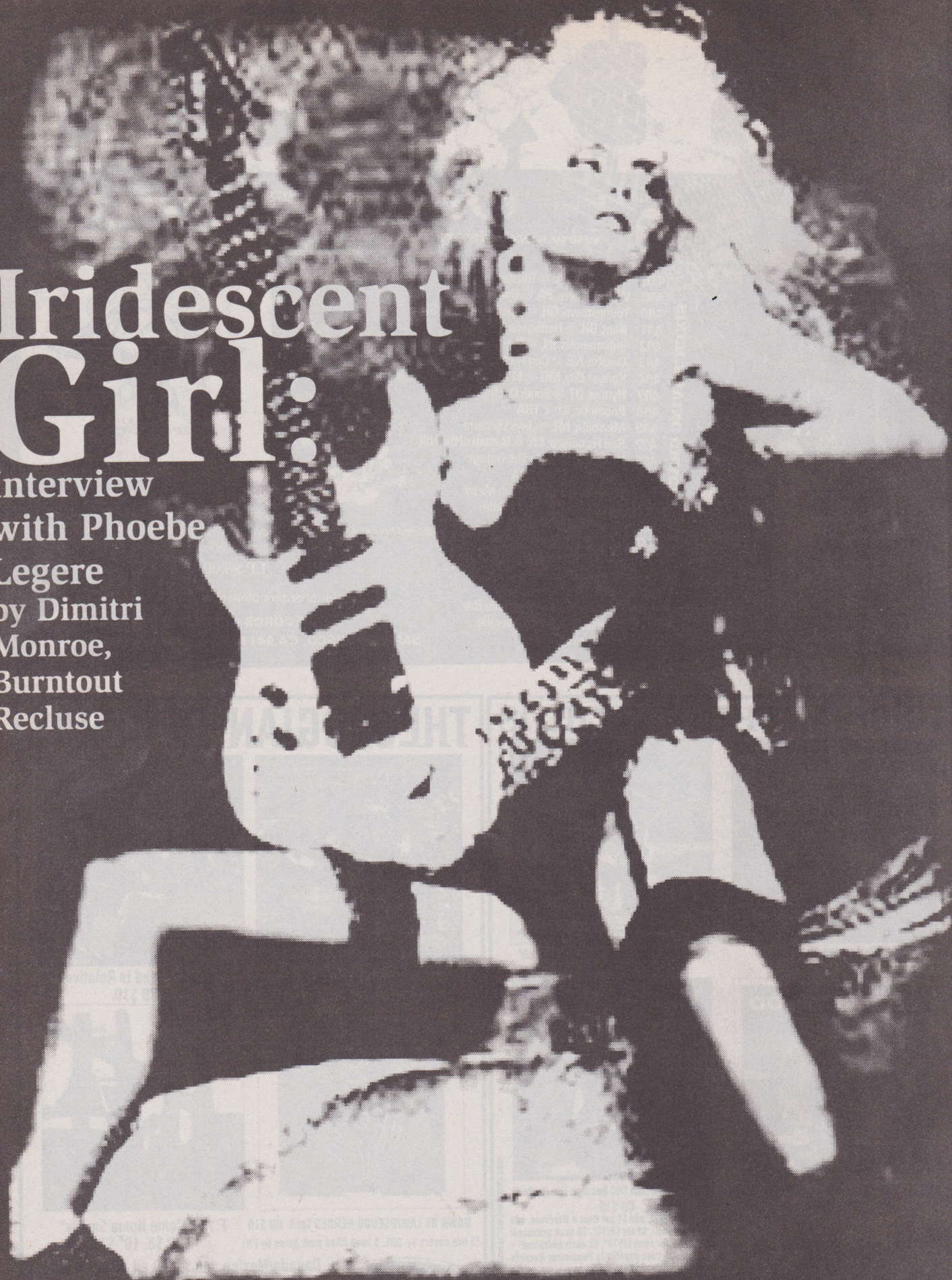
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Iridescent Girl:

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by Dimitri
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Outside Manhattan, you may only know her from her appearances in "Toxic Avenger" or "Playboy" or "Mondo New York", as the dauntingly radiant, ice-cream blonde, eccentric piano-playing avant goddess, but it's no accident that the poster for "Mondo NY" featured her face superimposed upon the Statue of Liberty, because she is also our fearless frontier-woman, a trail-blazing, rock'n'roll freedom fighter and, quite simply, the Queen of PUNK. If ya dispute my credentials to go 'round makin' pronouncements like that, even if I'm really only stating the obvious, then go ask Jim Thirwell or Cheetah Chrome or David Bowie, 'cuz they'll all back me up. PHOEBE LEGERE is one of the most dangerous, inspired, and talented creative-supernovas on the planet. New Yorkers take her presence for granted as one of the grand cultural amenities of living on the island. Clampdown suits and corporate moguls are scared shitless by her incendiary-gospel music. Her always-seditious, gorgeous songs are Alight and Winged, her head is on fire. She is almost certainly mad, like Billie Holiday or Jimi Hendrix or Miles Davis or Sun Ra were mad. Phoebe is one of those rare, luminous souls that this culture worships for three and a half minutes, and then burns at the stake. Gifted like Diamanda Galas crossed with Prince...She is scathingly beautiful, wickedly funny, annointed with wisdom, and her music possesses Native American mystical and healing qualities. PHOEBE LEGERE is one of the great spirits of our time, and it was my privilege to get to talk with her.

DM: Weren't you born on the Fourth of July?

PL: Yeah, That's what they tell me. Born at sea in the teeth of a gale, and as soon as I screamed my first high, long-disappointed scream, the storm subsided. And as I took the sweet breast into my grateful hungry lips for the first time, distant anemones burst on the horizon - yeah, fireworks. I still love them. I was raised in Lexington, Massachusetts, the home of the American Revolution. Checkout "The Patriot" if you want to see how my ancestors behaved. One of my forebears was a clergyman who preached "Freedom/Death to Tyrants!" from his pulpit in Maine, and another died at Bunker Hill. I'm also part Native American, and this mixture may explain the fact that I am a punk.

DM: Dominant childhood memories...

PL: I used to try to get girls to take their clothes off, especially the ones that had breasts. I hated school. I loved listening to music, particularly the Dead Boys, David Bowie, the Sex Pistols, Brahms, Japanese Koto music, Lakota Peyote hymns, Benjamin Brittan, Verdi, Beethoven,

Purcell, early Italian Music, Bach. I was really ugly as a child, and right on up to age 14. Then, one day I woke up and I was a Sex Kitten. I think it happened when I learned how to do my hair; before that, my mother used to do it in a braid with these barrettes screwed on so tight that I used to get headaches. I mean, Rock 'n' Roll is all about hair. As soon as I got control of the grooming, forget about it. That's when the trouble started. I had always been the star of every play and every musical, and I had every solo. But then when I added the glamour, the world turned on me and tried to crush my spirit. It's OK to be talented as long as you aren't sexually THERE. But I was there - big time - and I didn't give a shit. That's how I became bulletproof. I used to get expelled from school every day, for doing nothing. The teachers couldn't stand me. I was always reading and talking and asking questions, and saying the wrong thing, and listening to the wrong music, and wearing the wrong clothes. I was in so much trouble that I finally realized at a certain point that it was impossible to be in any more trouble than I was in. Right? So at that point you lose all fear. Anything is possible. If nothing is permitted, then everything is permitted.

Did you see that movie "The Virgin Suicides?" That was me. Sofia Coppola is brilliant. I am so amazed I didn't kill myself. When your parents turn on you and the school turns on you, then the other girls turn on you. If you look semi- good they're just waiting for an excuse to destroy you, right? One girl actually tried to poison me and I ended up in the hospital and my parents blamed me! But I didn't die. Perhaps I am strong because I am descended from two Mayflower travelers. One was named Remember. She was born on the Mayflower and they named her that so that we would always remember what they had been through just to have freedom. (By the way they went through Hell, in case you haven't heard the story of the death and the rats and the smell and the cold...) Yeah.

DM: What Instruments do you play?

PL: I started on Piano before age 3, wanted to play guitar, was pressured by parents to switch to cello, which they thought had more career possibilities or perhaps was more ladylike. I was asked to join a Rock Band, but parents refused to let me. Ran away from home at 15, and with no piano

or cello on the road I was forced to learn to play accordion, the most portable instrument at the time. I also play many synthesizers, and began composing electronic music on the early Buchla synthesizer at NYU. Moved on to Moogs and Korgs, analog synths, and now play Triton and Midi Accordion. I'm one of only seven people touring who play it. It must be heard to be believed. Sorry about the incomplete sentences. I get bored talking about myself.

DM: What were you like as a teenager?

PL: I was an asshole. All I cared about was getting drunk and partying. I was obsessed with the beauty of other kids, both male and female, and spent all my time daydreaming about having sex with them. I did not care about my future, as I was certain that I would die young. We used to drive cars in very very irresponsible ways, courting death, and we used to blow shit up for fun. I did not care about how I was throwing my life away and humiliating my parents. My mother says that I ruined my father's life. She says they had to move out of our hometown because I brought them so much shame. All I cared about was like immediate bodily pleasure. That's fucked up. But that's the way I was.

DM: What led you to Vassar College and what did you study there?

PL: There was a piano teacher named Ursula Oppens who taught there, and I wanted to study with her. I got all involved in Philosophy and Art when I went there. I was so intellectually turned on. And I was so in love with some of the girls there. I watched these Goddesses float by and I was reading Shelly and Kant and Wordsworth and Wittgenstein. I was just floating in an eroto-intellectual dream come true. Then I really started to get hip to art, like what it really means. I can't understand how these kids can go to these good schools and be exposed to the extreme beauty of poetry and ideas and music, and yet all they can think about is "Ah, now how can I make money?" Then these same schmucks who just concentrated on material stuff come to hear me play and they say, "Oh Phoebe, I'm so jealous. I wish I were living your life. My life is so boring..."

DM: How long have you lived in NY?

PL: I have been in and around NYC since age 15.

DM: How has it changed?

"All I cared about was getting drunk and partying. I was obsessed with the beauty of other kids, both male and female, and spent all my time daydreaming about having sex with them.."

PL: The East Village is full of jerks. They get their fashion ideas from Ally McBeal. Everybody used to make their own clothes. It was part of the music, right? Now, if you look different or creative, everyone laughs at you. Everyone is wearing mass-produced clothes they saw on TV and everyone is talking in voices they copied from characters on TV. In other words, the shitheads from the stupid suburbs who used to make my life HELL are here on 10th Street making me feel like running away from home again.

DM: Could you comment on the Mayor's famous sweeps of the homeless, "gentrification"/invasion of yuppie cyber-mercenaries, the unarmed black man shot 41 times by police, etc.

PL: He got cancer of the asshole. What more is there to say?

DM: Favorite Places that have yet to be bulldozed/shut down...

PL: Actually, the Wrap Around Waterfront Bicycle Path is way, way cool. I don't know who is responsible for it. It seems that Giuliani and the Rockefellers did it.. The only trouble is, everyone loves it so much that it is like a huge five-mile traffic jam of roller bladers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and now those people on the scooter called the



"Razor". (Have you tried this "Razor"? It is SENSATIONAL!)

DM: Don't you have some sort of affiliation/sponsorship with Starbucks, and isn't collaborating with corporate entities a slippery slope for a defiant artist of conviction such as yourself? Compare/contrast experiences with Starbucks to your major label courtships in the 1980s.

PL: I was signed by Epic at age 21. They held me for three years and never released a recording except for a "Dance 12" to DJ's. What assholes. So Starbucks is different. I was all excited about this MP3 thing. Like we're gonna change the world, right? And I thought "OK, we should do a tour with around five or six MP3 songwriters, and the money can come from Seattle, and it will be about coffee instead of booze, which we all know now is bad. And there was a former classmate who was in charge of the music program at Starbucks, and for about five minutes I thought we could work together. OK, I sometimes get optimistic and think that I can work within the system to change the system. I thought I could use the resources

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of the system to raise consciousness in America and bring higher moral values back into the culture. So do I really have to defend myself for trying to crawl out of the mud and carry a few artists out with me? Dimitri, your zine *Burntout Recluse* is one of the strongest, most beautifully-written magazines I have ever, ever read. I'm not shitting you, Dimitri, you are brilliant. But don't you think your zine might have a bit more impact on glossy high clay-content paper than it has on Xerox? Fuck it, who knows? I tried to create a corporate alliance between MP3 and Starbucks, and MP3 was willing to go along.

DM: Where do you stand on the whole Napster/MP3 legal debate over online music ownership? Has utilizing MP3's been profitable/worthwhile for you?

PL: Yes.

DM: Has it helped your music reach a wider audience in any discernable ways, thus far?

PL: Yes. Thousands and thousands of people have now heard my music. Dimitri, I NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER went into

music to make money. The best way I can express it, and I think you understand this, is that I went after it like some Divine Idea. A religious, ecstatic, perfect, INTANGIBLE, untouchable, dark, swelling, violently beautiful fountain of BE - a cascading cosmic keyboard of color...stars.. galaxies, orgasms...joy. The impossible Nothingness expressed in the cut and slouch of some guy's pants as he held his phallus guitar casually in triumph, and from the velvet throat of unslaughtered youth came a sob and a curse and I fuckin loved it, man. I NEVER NEVER NEVER NEVER went after rock'n'roll so I could be famous or rich. You can't believe how many insensitive asshole moron corporate scabs bore me and needle me with the words "oh Phoebe, I can't believe you're not as big as ____ (fill in the blank)." But the household name girls rammed down the throat of America, fully advertised and mostly forgettable, had a different agenda: 1) they were too short to be models, 2) BUT they knew how to trade sex for funding, and 3) they were narcissists who craved earthly adulation. (Remember in the bible when the Devil shows Jesus the world and says "All this can be yours," and Jesus says "Get lost, asshole.") Well, I know all about that. And

all these bitches who rule the world for one year, two years, a decade, more, they wanted to feel like the most important girl in the world, and they did ANYTHING they had to do to become that. But there is more to life than meets the eye, Dimitri.

You see, people like you and me dedicated our lives to music because it was beautiful, loud and true. It was better than birth. It was everythingeverything and more than that, we were in it together. And when four people become one person around a song, and you are riding that molten wave out of the mouth of night, and it is you singing, but yet it's not you because it's just DNA spinning and spiralling up out of you and every ape and every fruitfly and every human and every motherfucker in the whole chain of existence. And for just one second Earth has found the perfect word and the perfect phrase, and the drummer is with you and the guitar player is the firmament, and it's not about getting laid and it's not about getting paid. I have felt it, man, I have...I have felt the rock'n'roll in my body. And I think there are like 60,000 songs on MP3, and I think it is so beautiful that these people can get their music out there. There is nothing more tragic and sick than

"Record labels should feel a moral duty to release good music, but all they can think about is releasing music that five-year old girls like. "I have had four or five industry shitheads say to me, "If it's not Brittany Spears or NSync, I'm not interested."

unreleased music. It's like shit impacted in the entrails of the entire human species. It's got to get out, and Cybernature evolved to deal with it. MP3 is like a Glorious Musical Sewer. And we all know you might find a diamond in a sewer, or maybe an alligator or a rat. Or you might reach your hand down into the crapper and catch hold of the hand of a dirty sewer man whose got an old turd in his other hand and he's smiling.

Yeah, I curated a bunch of shows for MP3 artists to try to bring public awareness to the site, but most of the artists turned out to be narcissists who just wanted to be famous. And they were all bitter and you couldn't do enough for them, and they would get jealous, because I don't know why every NY artist has to be so Goddamn territorial and competitive. I guess it's because there's so little territory

left. The rats are scrambling around trying to control a little corner of the cage. Like this broad came from San Diego and MP3 said "please help her and make a booking for her and Phoebe, can she use your amp?" So like the sucker I am I carry this Marshall down the six flights from my walkup for this girl I've never even met (because of my bleeding heart sense of Cybercommunity), and then she didn't even say thank you. And my band played a very funny song I wrote called "Let's Get Drunk and Fuck" (which I thought reflected quite a positive mental attitude, right?), and she said, "I thought I liked you until I heard that song." And then she said "You have ruined my son's life. He was watching our show on the Cybercast and he heard that horrible word." And I was pretty impressed that a ten-year old boy knew how to download Realplayer 7 and watch a cybercast, but still...I was like "Wooooo! Bitches, back off! It's like rock'n'roll has just become about trying to get signed and, at that point, it's not interesting. You know, Dimitri? If you are just trying to conform perfectly to Radio Formats and trying not to scare anyone...and you don't even comprehend the mixture of sincerity and pain of a song called "LETS GET DRUNK AND FUCK"!! I said to myself, "What are these people even doing in rock'n'roll? What is this, a teaparty? If I've got to put up with this boring lameass shit, I might as well go work for a bank like my sister and at least make some money.

So then I realized that I should just concentrate on my own band. And the girlfriends of my band members are very supportive, and now I am writing good songs. Because there is nothing - NOTHING - in this world that's better than HAVING PEOPLE APPRECIATE/LOVE what you are doing. That is why MP3 is good. Songwriters need to be heard. David Koresh and Charles Manson were both frustrated songwriters, so it's pretty heavy-duty stuff. Not to mention Hitler. Hell, I think Mussolini played the ukelele, or maybe not. But anyway, at the moment that I saw how jealous and competitive the artists were that I WAS TRYING TO HELP, I decided that enough was enough. I have done enough for artists. It is time to do something else, and at that very moment I met My True Once-in-a-Lifetime Band. We are called Phoebe Legere and THE HOT HAIRY HUNKS. Of course, they are bald. I shave them myself...I just leave a little tuft of hair between the balls. Dimitri, you will love it.

DM: How many titles do you currently have available online, and can you please

discuss your most recent full-lengths?

PL: The most interesting thing is "Blue Curtain - Magically Fourteenth Street" on Einstein Records. It's a non-profit label, and through them I met some people and I am now going to be singing with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and I also got a NYSCA grant to do a new electronic experimental symphony, and I am the host of a new TV show about Multi Media Leading Edge Art and Music. And "Blue Curtain" is very, very over the edge. I have a painting on the back and on the front I am sort of splayed over the piano with a new hairstyle I developed for this CD. (Sometimes I come up with ideas which are totally absurd just to see how long it will take for people to steal them from me. Like, can you believe Brittany Spears stylists had no one else to steal from when they came up with the costume for her new video? It's amazing, isn't it!!!) So anyway, back to Blue Curtain and Einstein Records. I'm like rapping over these very Afro and electronic beats and grooves, and then I'm like playing crazy piano, and it's all about a night in the East Village, and I've got Ikue Morie on it, who was the Japanese girl drummer of DNA, right. And John Zorn, Arto Lindsay, Jim Staley. Yeah, It's very, very, very radical. Not pop, Dimitri, but people are loving it. You can order it from Roulette.Org. And be sure to see the video I did at my website - the first avant garde MTV video - with rare footage of my all-girl band, the 4 Nurses of the Apocalypse, performing in the Catacombs under Paris.

DM: Was "Last Tango In BubbleLand" an independant release like the CDs that are advertised and available at MP3?

PL: Indie, baby, and I actually charted with "Amazing Love", the reggae, gospel, hip hop number. You can order it directly from me, with its original cover art and liner notes, for cheap for fifteen bucks at Phoeblegere.com...

DM: Is MP3 high-tech-jazz actually a viable marketing alternative or just a glut of bad bands no one in their right mind could mine through to remotely discover a diamond in the mire such as yourself?

PL: Hey, don't expect anything. Just upload your music, participate in the message boards, and wait. It's like fishing. And when you get that first email from some poor sweetheart living in some Godforsaken place on the other side of the planet, and they say "you have given me a reason for living, I love your music." You

tell me. MP3 is the most important development in music since the gramophone. And just wait, there are even better compression formats coming!

DM: Do you vote? Would you feel comfortable discussing your views on hotbutton election issues like abortion?

PL: NO MORE HUMANS SHOULD BE BORN! Let's give it a rest!

DM: Drugs...

PL: LEGALIZE DRUGS and PROSTITUTION. This will cripple the Mafia.

DM: Gun control...

PL: 99 percent of violent crimes are committed by men. Therefore, ALL WOMEN SHOULD HAVE GUNS, BUT NO MEN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO POSSESS A GUN. I MYSELF AM HEAVILY ARMED.

DM: Oval Office blowjobs...

PL: The Oval Office would be a very nice place to have sex, and it all worked out well. All men like to have two women, a smart one and a young one with the opposite kind of tits their wife has. Fuck it. Clinton is a narcissist and a sex addict who publicly humiliated his wife, but still I defend to the death his right to have sex in the Oval Office.

D.M.: and the death penalty?

P.L.: NO DEATH PENALTY! Criminals should be studied. In fact, I think that criminals should be used for the day care of children, since the children would teach the criminals how to love and laugh and the criminals could teach the kids the important life skills such as how to lie, steal, stab, and kill. The kids will need that, especially if they go into the music business.

DM: At this point isn't the whole system, I mean all our laws and societal constructs, just irretrievably profit-driven, corrupt, and hopelessly rigged?

PL: Yeah, the lucky sperm club rules. It always has. But I, in abject poverty, obscurity, loneliness, and outside, am denied the goodies. I, overworked, betrayed, cheated, ripped off, in my slum, even with "nothing," own the world. The world is mine, and on a day like today, 75 degrees, with high clouds blossoming, a few good friends, alone with my machine

in my slum in NYC, I am writing to you. And that is what it is all about., a few - with the spark - holding hands with words. I gotta new CD I can be proud of, and a kick-ass rock band that believes in me and is ready to tour, and sleep on floors and get in that van and ride. I gotta say, Dimitri, I don't deny that I'd like to kill myself just for the rush, but why bother? I am Phoebe Legere, and anyone who really knows the deal knows that I am experiencing one of the coolest lives of all time. Yeah.

DM: So how do you keep believing?

PL: There is nothing to believe in. There is nothing here. We made it all up. Dimitri, you and I were making it up from the very beginning, and we created a superb villain for ourselves to fight called the Hegemony of the American Music Corporations. American Fucking Corporate Global Culture. The blob that ate the world. It's down to a tiny group of brave fighters, Dimitri. Let's stand together!

DM: What music are you currently listening to for pleasure?

PL: Today I heard this stupid guy Eric Heatherly or something. It was country, MCA NASHVILLE. He has a song called "I Don't make the Rules, I just break them." It was really stupid good. I love to hear that kind of Nashville guitar, with slide and everything. I wonder if he will make it. I listen to classic GOSPEL, I listen to early blues, Cajun, Zydeco, and Native American, French music, all types of jazz except smooth. I listen to New House, Hip Hop, Trance, Techno, Country, and of course I listen to all the new rock'n'roll, and my band is really doing something you might call "roots alternative." The old name for it was Swamp Pop. OOOOOOO, I LOVE MY BAND!

DM: If you had a record label, whose music would you release and why?

PL: Record labels should feel a moral duty to release good music, but all they can think about is releasing music that five-year old girls like. I have had four or five industry shitheads say to me, "If it's not Britney Spears or NSync, I'm not interested." And they know, as we all do, how FICKLE little girls are. But they just don't care, because when the Spice Girls are done they've got Britney, and when she's done they've got Christina, and when she's done they've got Mandy, and it's an endless supply of shit. Or, as Clive Davis once said, "Bring me the next head on a platter."

DM: All time favorite artists and albums...

PL: For me, it's all about songwriters, Dimitri. So this might surprise you, but John Hiatt, Robbie Robertson, John Prine, George Gershwin, IGGY POP, DAVID BOWIE, the Beatles, Schubert, Verdi, OK, then there's Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Robert Johnson. For the French I would say Frehel, Damia, Piaf, Chevalier, Mistinguett, and for opera Callas was a badass motherfucker, too, like a rock'n'roller really. Best American singer of all time is MAHALIA JACKSON, but Billie Holiday and Sinatra get me off. Piano Players: Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, Art Tatum, Count Basie, Oscar Peterson, Teddy Wilson. For lady songwriters everyone has their favorite, so I'd better not get involved in that though, you know, I really like anyone who can write a song. It's so hard, but it can kill you if you do it right. Nancy Griffith has written some very nice songs. Then you have Shirley Horn, who does beautiful interpretations. What's the difference, as Bob Dylan says, "there are enough songs in the world." Of course, when you feel one pressing up against your heart and wanting to burst out into the world, you can't stop it.

DM: People you believe in...

PL: I believe in AL GORE and BARRY HUMPHREYS (Dame Edna) and HILARY KNIGHT (Eloise at the Plaza) and TONY FORTUNATO (my drummer) and Matty Cute (my guitar player) and PETER MINTUN, who plays piano and the Carlyle, and I believe in my niece Abigail who is six. You can hear a song I wrote about her at MP3.com/phoebe.

DM: Favorite magazines...

PL: *Burntout Recluse*, *Utne Reader*, *The Wire* (England); for fashion *I.D.* can be good; the FAO SCHWARTZ toy catalogue...

DM: Films...

PL: "Alphaville", "Les Enfants De Paradis", "Marquis" (not mine - another one about a dog). My most favorite is a Chinese movie called "King of Masks". Call me an asshole, but I love Mike Myers. I love movies - I saw two yesterday!

DM: Fave websites...

PL: The website Elfin Creative did for A Perfect Circle is one of the best I have seen.

DM: FAVORITE PUNK ROCK BANDS...

PL: DEAD BOYS, SEX PISTOLS, MISFITS, BLACK FLAG.

DM: Didn't you tour with Bowie?

PL: Yeah.

DM: How did you know him?

PL: He always appropriates whatever is the BIG HIP thing, and I guess that year because of "Mondo New York" he assumed I was the Big HIP thing. What he didn't know - how could someone from England understand how we treat artists in America? - is that I was the BIG HIP thing and I had NO RECORD CONTRACT, NO MANAGER, AND NO AGENT. It was so funny. I had jockeyed myself into this position just on the strength of this wonderful band (Blond Fox), but without a CORPORATE MACHINE behind me how could I do anything? A record company and their millions is what drives a career, and unless you were conforming to the stupid shit of that era, which has been completely forgotten, and is now just an embarrassing joke even to those who pushed it down our throats, they weren't interested in you. Even so I could have fucked and sucked my way to the top, but I was in love at the time and like a moron I wanted to be "true to my lover". YUCK! But we have the same situation of total musical stupidity today, and if you aren't a plastic and collagen-plumped stupid lip-synching dolly, they treat you like a leper. (Unless of course Daddy Money pays the three million dollar admission fee for your superstardom - see my website for more details.) They are scared shitless of Art and Music, and that is why their dicks wilt when they see what is happening on the Internet. Because the kids are going to Phoebelegere.com and MP3.com/phoebe. They are going by the millions, and those dildo assholes Metallica, who now sound like they are playing cabaret music, have wimped out and are keveling about intellectual property. Since when has music been property, huh? Music is a scream, a howl, a red jet of feeling that purifies the race. Music is a verbal sacrifice to Mr. and Mrs. Supreme D. J. God, a sacred immaterial cosmic bark that BELONGS TO ALL OF US. Fuck Metallica, anyway. I can't believe I used to believe in Metal. Actually, the new Testament sounds pretty good. Where was I...oh, Bowie. What was that like? Bowie is much better live than he is on disc. He is so handsome that I fainted when I met him. He was very nice. I wanted an acoustic piano, so he rented a white one and they put it on a forklift. I very much enjoyed singing for 20,000 people, even though he wouldn't let me

use my full band. He didn't want me to use a rhythm section. Gee, I wonder why.

DM: Did you participate in the Lilith Fair thing?

PL: Oh yeah, right, like those wimpy conforming corporate assholes would let me on Lilith Fair. Not that I wouldn't have leapt at the opportunity had I been asked...

DM: What about the collaboration with Foetus on his "Wiseblood" EP?

PL: Roli (Swans) was the producer. He was so compelling. He said "Phoebe, forget about sex, just kill kill kill." Well, that was the way people thought at that time, and Foetus was at the height of his powers. Roli said "Play like Beethoven times 10,000!" I said, "Foetus, if you keep singing like that you will have no voice by the time you are 30." He said, "I will burn that bridge when I get to it."

DM: How did that come about?

PL: He was Lydia Lunch's boyfriend. We were all friends.

DM: What do you think of him and his work?

PL: Very very very-very brilliant.

DM: You're mentioned in Nick Zedd's autobio, "Totem of the Depraved", along with my ex-girlfriend, the Venus of Rivington Street, Lisa Baeza? Do you know her?

PL: I do not know her, who is she? Speaking of that brilliant scum Zedd, did you know Nick Zedd stole the title of that book from Ela Troyano. She did a movie called "Totem of the Depraved". In it, Nick Zedd fucks a boy with blue hair, a dog, and then he rips my clothes off. It was a very good movie, but Ela got mad because she was the girlfriend of John Zorn at the time, and she was behind the idea of total improvisation. But Zedd showed up with a script. He handed me the script and it was really funny, biting and clever and cruel. I started to read my part and Ela had a shit fit, but she kept filming and then she threw the movie out the window. For many years, we assumed it was lost. Then she showed it at the Museum of Modern Art. There's a lot more to this story, but I guess that would have to be another installment...

DM: Where can your fans see your movie, "Marquis De Slime"? Didn't you write, direct, and star in that?

PL: Yes, I wrote it. I play a female wrestler with supernatural powers. It is extremely beautiful, and can be understood by anyone even if they do not speak a word of French. It's a collectors item, and if you have children they watch it again and again, so it's a very good investment. To get a taste of "Slime", go to Phoebelegere.com/videography2.

DM: Wasn't it something to do with women wrestlers and Jim Morrison's grave?

PL: Yes, we spent the night locked in Pere Lachaise cemetery. That is the cemetery in Paris where Jim Morrison, Oscar Wilde, Edith Piaf, Marcel Proust, and many other intense French poets ditched their human bodies. Pere Lachaise is a very old graveyard, and some of the graves are open. We lit the graves with red and blue lights and added fog to make it even more eerie. We were trying for a Dario Argento feeling - very cruel, very beautiful, very strange. I had to go to the bathroom during the shooting and of course there was nowhere to go. We were drinking wine and stuff, so I snuck off. It was dark and fucking scary as fuck, right? So I just pulled my pants down and took a quick shit, and then I noticed the name of the most sacred author in France. I'm ashamed to say it, but yeah, I shit right on Victor Hugo's grave. I didn't mean to, I just couldn't hold it anymore. You know what I mean? It was him or me.

DM: How did you get it produced?

PL: Well, I wrote it in English first. Here's the story. You see, I was living in Paris. Alone. And I began to get the idea of a monster named Slime. In my mind, every night this monster would crawl up out of the sewers and start killing young girls. And he would keep these girls prisoner in a kind of rock orchestra, and some of the music would be the sound of their blood dripping into silver bowls. And they would be chained while they played their violins and guitars, and they would scream and cry. And this monster would draw pictures of them while they suffered. You know, it was like being on a Major Label. And so at the same time, I was drawing pictures of female wrestlers. I was really into this. I mean, many of the great artists have enjoyed drawing people in combat because of the push and pull of the muscles. You know the human anatomy is so beautiful and the greatest thing in the world, right? We are actually the best monsters. So then I started to subscribe to female wrestling magazines, and I started to follow it. I

learned how to wrestle for "Toxic Avenger, Part 3", and I enjoyed it very much. It's so satisfying to pick up a small chick and put her into an airplane spin and then throw her down on a mattress. Well, all this started to combine in my mind with my experience in Show Business, and I used the corruption of the world of wrestling as a symbol for corruption in show business. Then I found other parallels. People think that wrestling is fake, but these wrestlers get hurt all the time. Why, in the opening scene of "Marquis De Slime", the female heavyweight champion of the world, ANGEL, broke her sister's arm!. See my website for my "takedown" of Angel. Similarly, people think that rock'n'roll is fake. But you and I know that even when it starts out fake, as it did with the Sex Pistols, it then becomes real and people get horribly maimed and killed from the power of it.

DM: Did you make any money from those Troma "Toxic Avenger" movies you appeared in?

PL: No, but I did my own stunts and that was exciting because they had some really good explosions. I learned how to make cheap movies from Troma. They ripped me off totally, raped me of my ideas, made me sign a "model's release", which I signed, and then used that to justify the fact that they sold my image to Marvel Comics and gave me nothing. They made a Saturday morning cartoon of ME, a girl who looked exactly like me, with my face, my body, my clothes, and my accordion, and then they hired someone else to do her voice with a hideous Brooklyn accent. And every time this girl opened her mouth to sing, everyone would groan and hold their ears. Pretty nice, huh? That's worse than what I did to Victor Hugo. Hugo is dead and he can't feel it, but I am not dead yet so I feel everything! I got the cartoon pulled off the air, but I was mortally wounded by it because many people thought that was how I sounded. Troma asked me to do "Toxic 4", but I had to decline because I am in the Screen Actors Guild and so I cannot do low-budget B-grade non-union shit movies like "Toxic Avenger" anymore.

DM: What do you do to put food on the table when not employed as a Fulltime RockStar?

PL: I have that band called Phoebe Legere and the Hot Hairy Hunks, and we make money. I also sell my paintings and make quite a lot of money that way.

DM: What hapened to your punk band, the

4 Nurses of the Apocalypse? Didn't you tour with that group?

PL: Yes, we crossed the country several times, sleeping on punk people's floors. That was so cool. I loved the Nurses. It's an interesting story, actually. I finally finished a Nurses CD, with the samples from Dario Argento horror movies and screams that I recorded in the emergency rooms of New York hospitals, mixed with unimaginably distorted walls and walls of guitars and layer upon layer of back-up vocals like Queen or perhaps Verdi. You can purchase the record at MP3.com/phoebe. I was on Megaforce Records at the time, John Zazula's label. You know, he had been involved with Metallica and stuff. And he said "yeah, this is really great, but why don't you make a record where we can hear you singing?" So

he sorta killed the record in the cradle. And really, quite a few people "in the industry" objected to the fact that I combined intense classic punk with real singing. Like it's not really punk if you have a good voice, or you don't have integrity unless you scream. Oh, fuck everyone. I get requests for it from all over the world. People love it. And then Blink 182 totally ripped off the whole concept. How can people do that? They just rape the underground. They stroke the starving, aching fringe like a bunch of wasps with their worker aphids. I'm an APHID being stroked for my milky juice! Jesus, it's disgusting. Will your readers follow this insect metaphor? Perhaps you should include a photo of a wasp dominating his APHID slave. But the Nurses was cool. Every song had a medical theme - "I Want to Take Your





Temperature", "Male Groupie", "X RATED AMERICAN", Vampire Nurses". It was horror core, really. I looked around and the only scene that seemed real and true to me was the hardcore scene. But they want you to scream or you can't be a member of the club. I scream sometimes, but only when I want that color. Otherwise I prefer to sample screams and play them from my suicide piano. I did not explain the instrument I invented for the Nurses. The suicide piano was a miniature Flying V guitar bolted onto a keyboard, with a meat cleaver welded to the bottom and a severed hand sticking out. I would play in a shrunken head mask. One record executive came to see us at CBGB's, and Tristan reported that she said, "Oh, does she have talent? I couldn't tell." The meat cleaver should have been the giveaway, really.

DM: Didn't you once share a guitarist with Jim Carroll AND Mariah Carey?!

PL: Yes, for ten years I played with that person and we lived communally, as I have with so many of my band members. Then one day I said to Dumb Slut, "Dumb Slut, you are beautiful, you are dumb you have a penis, you are able to copy exactly the alternashit they play on the radio. You are the one who should be a star, and because you are a dumb slut it will be easy for you, for that is what THEY want. I pushed him and pushed him. I went to his showcases. I sewed his pants. I was his cheerleader, his

constant strength, pouring love into him 24 hours a day. After trying for six months, he was signed to Geffen Records. I found out, through MP3, that the Goo Goo Dolls were looking for an opening act. I told him "Fatso, you must be with the Goo Goo Dolls, for that is what you are," and by nightfall he was on the bill. He rented a 30,000 dollar tour bus to go around the country opening for the Goo Goo Dolls. He is now doing time in Angola State Prison. I don't want to talk about it. Dumb Slut was the love of my life. Now I gotta go it alone, Dimitri.

DM: Who are you collaborating with now?

PL: I am collaborating with the Hot Hairy Hunks.

DM: My friend Anthony has a copy of the porn mag *Puritan* (illegal in Cincinnati, where I live) that features excerpts from your book. Please tell me more about that and where it's available...

PL: The book is called "Shame, Depravity and Lesbianism in the Twilight of a Dying Civilization." It is available on the internet.

DM: I know you are very pro-woman and a fan of rad punk dykes Tribe 8. I've always perceived you as more humanist than a feminist, though, so I'm hoping you can give me and other marginalized white males...

PL: You don't know what marginalized is till you wake up one morning and find out you gotta pair of tits, a clitoris, and a pocketbook...

DM: ...like myself, insight as to why the feminist lunatic fringe is so quick to dismiss every white boy as an privileged rapist oppressor.

PL: What I'd like to know is why you have such low self esteem that you keep chaining yourself to one dead end job after another. You are a wonderful, wonderful writer. A handsome, smart white boy like you should be able to bullshit his way into a six figure salary. C'mon! It's easy! This is America! Anyway, here's my answer: My whole life has been a hymn to women...all my paintings, all my songs, my bands, my orgainzations, and all of a sudden I am experiencing a shift. My new songs, "Hot Sicilian Pizza Boy", "Crazy White Trash", "Good Stiff Cock-tail", and "Midnight's Got a MInd of its Own" are all examinations of Maleness. My most recent literary venture, "Planet Boob" is about a group of large-breasted genius women from the planet Boobonia. Their spacecraft, the

H.M.S. BOOBONIA, lands in the Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey. They land and proceed to teach the teenagers of New Jersey about astrophysics. This novel was the result of my insight that large-breasted strippers are, in fact, human beings just like us! BUT NOW I have had another breakthrough - it suddenly dawned on me that men are human beings, too! Men are really smart women in really stupid bodies.

DM: But where I live, poor white marginalized people are conditioned to blame other economically-disadvantaged classes ("black welfare mothers") and are easy prey for intolerant conservative rats like Pat Buchanan, Rush Limbaugh, white supremacist groups, etc., who seem to acknowledge them and "feel their pain." Whereas even forward-thinking, would-be revolutionary cats like myself are often alienated by all these other supposedly liberal groups' hardline, intolerant, insular agendas, so it's hard to move forward with them when there's no dialogue. In Censornati, even the gay and black subcultures are conservative, uncool, intolerant, hateful, and judgemental. School me on this sepratism amongst the subcultures, if you can.

PL: I don't know why you live there. Why don't you move to New York where you belong. We now have a bike path that goes halfway around the island.

DM: Over Christmas, I lost a bookstore job over a debate about *Playboy* (not even *Hustler*, mind you - *Playboy*!!) after a customer inquired about it, because the "family values" richguy, rightwing owner refused to sell it, saying it "attracted a bad element", and I was suprised to learn that when it came to "pornography" even my college-educated, lesbian feminist co-workers supported this and seemed quick to "get into bed", so to speak, with the exact same patriarchal, evangelical hard right powers-that-be that they oppose so fervently outside the abortion clinics. How do you feel about *Playboy* as a feminist who has appeared naked in it, porn, exploitation, etc., and aren't these really just issues of adult consent and...

PL: OK, first of all I love naked women. The second thing I look at on a woman is her breasts. Yeah! I love guys, too. Not the penis per say, but the shoulders and the arms. I love little innocent girls who carry little pink handbags and haven't even figured out that existence is a con, and even more I love big tough dykes who don't give a shit how they look. I like to look at pictures of naked women, I love to paint naked women, I wish I could get

more naked women into my life.

I did *Playboy* because, as usual, I was trying to get my art out to a wider, national audience and I saw an opportunity. It made me fucking famous, so fuck it. They paid me more money than I had ever seen or dreamt about, and I lived on it and wrote songs and painted pictures for about three years with the *Playboy* money. Also, you know, now that I think about it, it's kind of funny that I did *Playboy*, because when I was a teen no boys liked me because I was 1) Too Thin, 2) Too Smart, and 3) Too Talented. Even today this guy emailed me and said "Dear Phoebe, I went to First Grade with you and I think you are really beautiful..." Well, why didn't he say something in First Grade. I mean, I was probably horny as fuck then. But you see, once you've done *Playboy*, guys think you are really a sexy thing to fuck and touch and kiss. Like you must be really pretty in the way that all of America wants a girl to be pretty, but the thing is that almost all women are gorgeous. I am not kidding, man. Give them that *Playboy* lighting and hair and makeup, and anybody looks fuckable. I mean, *Playboy* spent like four hours just lighting my thigh. It's a real science, man. They kept saying really offensive things like "Smile for Daddy." I just got sucked into it because I wanted them to publish some of my paintings, and then they started to offer me more and more and more money. "Just show one nipple," and then they show you all the pictures of all the famous women that did it. Hollywood and the media require the public sacrifice and humiliation of public nudity from a woman before they grant you the wand of superstardom. Think about it.

DM: Isn't the issue still about free choice, taste, and personal preference?

PL: I don't know what more to say about this question. I mean, of course. The First Amendment all the way. But the Morality Police are only part of the problem. You know the worst tyrant we have right now? Madison Avenue! Yeah, TV commercials. Those gorgeous, beautifully-edited, emotionally-manipulative, sneaky little hooks that enter our brain lobes and transform us from the joyful creative animals we could be into these seething weird webs of modern desire. And who makes these commercials, those exquisite sick little 30-second propoganda bites? Who? Who are these latter-day Goebbels? Don't you know? ARTISTS! Yes, the great artists of our time, if they have any brains, have been scared out of the garrett, out of the studio, out of the museum, and are being pumped from Art Schools and Film

Schools directly into advertising. It's the only place for a "creative person" these days. And my mother would be so proud of me if I just gave up and joined the human race and got a 9-5 job on Madison Avenue. I'm sure she's praying right now - she goes to bed at around 10 - that when I wake up tomorrow morning I will renounce my life as an artist and I will march right up to Madison Avenue and get myself a good soul-killing status quo boot-licking JOB.

DM: Last year was, in my humble view from the gutter, the all-time low for radio and mainstream music EVER - insipid bubblegum, discojunk, rap metal, consumerism-obsessed hip hop, soulless R&B, vapid crap. How do we overthrow the corporate media rule and reclaim the airwaves?

PL: If artists continue to compete against each other, if we cannot organize, if we continue to judge each other harshly, instead of rejoicing in each other's creativity, if women keep scratching each other's eyes out, and if men keep clocking the exact number of hairs on each other's heads, then we will be forced to listen to one Brittany Spears after another until the American Empire chokes, suffocated by the stench of its own huge, vacuous yet intensely smelly farts. I have more to say about this, but why bother. They killed Socrates, They killed Martin Luther King, They killed Marilyn, They killed Janis Joplin, They killed Christ, but They just can't get enough N'Sync.

DM: I remember reading your declaration that you planned on taking your talent out of the genepool. Explain why you choose not to have children.

PL: There are already too many people in the world. Am I the only one who has noticed this?

DM: Can you see yourself ever getting married to anyone besides me?

PL: I married a bull three years ago. A Grand National Champion Bull named Turbo. We were married by Hunter Thompson in Aspen, Colorado. When the ceremony was done, we untied the rope and the bull trotted away. Afterwards I gave Hunter a blowjob. Fuck marriage and fuck love too, while we're at it.

DM: Your paintings and cable access show, what else did I forget to ask you about? Shows...Tours...Current Events...Future Goals...

PL: I'll be with Bill Clinton on Friday on the Capitol Steps, Club Helsinki in Great Barrington Mass on July 28, Siros in Saratoga on August 19, Cleveland Chamber Symphony in Cleveland Ohio on Sept 25. I am booking the Hot Hairy Hunks now, so keep checking Phoebelegere.com for updates. Starting at the end of August 2000, Roulette TV (I am the head writer and host) starts on DCTV in Manhattan at 4 PM on Thursdays. MTV is interested in this show about Frontier Edge New Media, Art and Music, so stay tuned. I just got a NYSCA grant to write a Rock Symphony. My goal is to do something that doesn't suck. This may be impossible, given the cultural climate of today. The toads are dragging me down to their Kingdom of Mud, where they are going to impregnate me with their gelatinous toad sperm and make me give birth to gelid-eyed, wet, wart babies. Oh God, Dimitiri, save me!

DM: Will you sing on my record?

PL: Of course.

DM: WEBSITES/MERCHANDISE/FANCLUB/CONTACT ADDRESSES...Where can people find your products?

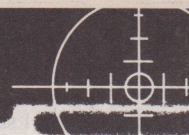
PL: T-shirts, mugs, and mousepads can be ordered through MP3.com/phoebe. "Marquis De Slime" is 20 dollars, "Blue Curtain", my new CD, is 15 dollars and "Last Tango in Bubbleland", my last CD, is 15 dollars. These things can be purchased at 418 Park Avenue South, New York NY 10016. Also signed prints of my paintings on canvas and in an 9 X 12 format suitable for framing can be ordered through this address. The Phoebe Legere fan club is at FuntoneUSA@aol.com, or call (404) 521-3918 to receive the *Phoebe Legere Newsletter* and to purchase other CD's like "Six Flights Up" and "1000 Kisses". You can get the 4 Nurses of the Apocalypse at MP3.com/phoebe, and that is some punk ass shit, je vous assure!

DM: Anything else you want to plug?

PL: Phoebelegere.com, for the highest quality video streaming on the web.

DM: Discography...

PL: Go to Phoebelegere.com



As some of you already know, I was born and bred in the City of Brotherly Love or, as I affectionately like to call it, Hostile City USA. Recently my hometown proved to be hostile enough to garner national television coverage — again — and I would be remiss if I didn't throw my two cents in on the party-turned-riot heard very briefly around the world. Perhaps you saw a little of our city's version of a Mardi Gras celebration on CNN? They must have been showing the footage caught by a local news station that "happened

so you can get a better idea of the whole picture.

The "Greek Picnic" is an annual event sponsored by an association of African-American Fraternities and Sororities. (I'm sure the group has a name, but I don't know it.) Every year there is a huge media and police frenzy during the days and weeks leading up to and following the "Greek Picnic". The event itself takes place in Fairmount Park (a very large park in West Philly) and mainly consists of frat brothers and sisters getting together, and — from what I understand, though I've never attended since I'm neither black nor a member of any "Greek" organization — barbecuing, socializing, and having step contests. Over the years, however, the picnic itself has given way to another sub-tradition that involves lots and lots of teenagers and college students rushing down to South Street as soon as it gets dark to "join in" the party. Of course most "Greek Picnic" goers don't attend that party, as most college-educated folks in their 30s and 40s, whether they be white, black, Latino, Asian, gay, straight, Jewish, fundamentalist, Christian or pagan, are not, generally speaking, into throwing bottles at apartment windows, whipping out their dicks and pissing on peoples' front steps, or flashing their tits from their car windows. When night falls, the majority of the people that organize and patronize the daytime event are the first to jump in their expensive rides or rental SUV's and hightail it back to the suburbs or their luxury hotels to finish up their weekend of fun in a slightly more civilized manner. The Whiskey Rebel used to work on South Street, and he survived quite a few years of festivities. I believe he's mentioned in previous columns the effect that the picnic has on residents, businesses, or anyone else with the misfortune of being in the area on one of those evenings — and if you ask him, I'm sure he'll tell you stories about things you've never had to concern

yourself with at your workplace. Without rehashing the litany of shame year by year, let's just say that scandalous shit goes down on South Street EVERY year during the weekend of the picnic. Rioting, looting, sexual assault, public drunkenness; yes, my fair city does indeed have it all. Every year the police have a plan of action, but apparently they can't find a good one. It's fortunate that most of our sports teams are unsuccessful. Does anyone want to guess what might happen on South Street if the Sixers win

a championship?

This year residents and business owners got a bonus dose of cheer, courtesy of the city's recent interest in Mardi Gras. (I don't know about you, but Philly is not the city I first associate with Mardi Gras-related activities.) But never let it be said that our city's business owners would pass up an opportunity to make a quick buck. It seems that one South Street bar, aptly named Fat Tuesday, decided that they should start hosting Fat Tuesday parties a few years ago, and that this year they actually got around to doing some advertising. The local media picked up on it — they were paid, it was the least they could do — and by a sheer stroke

flip
AND flops
champagne



leslie goldman

to be" set up right in the center of the action on national TV, because Larry and I got a lot of funny e-mail from folks all around the country in the days following the incident. I myself saw the whole thing unfold in front of my eyes from the relatively safe and comfy confines of our apartment, which is located about ten blocks from where the action was. (Interestingly enough, Domino's won't deliver a pizza here because the neighborhood is too "dicey".)

I heard that there was going to be some sort of Fat Tuesday party on South Street early in the day via the local news, and therefore made a mental note to avoid the area. (We usually avoid the area anyway, since there's just not that much of interest on South Street itself and the streets are generally clogged with tourists, suburbanites, hipsters and wannabe thugs — even more so on the weekends.) If you've heard the song and think of the place as some sorta mythical, flower-child type place — take a stroll down South Street on a Saturday evening. You won't find any hippies, but you will find plenty of shiftless teenagers looking for "action," suburbanites looking for a little downtown "edginess," crusty punks with expensive clothes and intricate, equally expensive piercings begging for change, and other assorted local miscreants looking to prey on the teenagers and suburbanites. Needless to say, the last place you want to be during any kind of celebration is near South Street. Longtime city dwellers like Larry and myself are already all too familiar with that drill. We've lived through year after year of "Greek Picnics", which is another story in itself but one that needs to be mentioned

***Rioting, looting,
sexual assault, public
drunkenness; yes, my
fair city does indeed
have it all.***

of luck (on the bar's part) this particular Tuesday fell during many of the local colleges' and universities' spring break. In case you're wondering, there are MANY local colleges and universities within the city limits. Their plan worked, since hundreds and hundreds of people showed up on South Street early in the morning to wait in line to get drunk. And drink they did. By some accounts a number of them passed out, woke up, and then drank some more. True to Hostile City form, later in the day the real action started. Again it would take too long to go over everything I saw unfold that night, courtesy of a local news station that smartly decided to set up a camera crew right across the street from Fat Tuesday — we just happened to turn the TV on just as things started getting out of control — but suffice it to say that it was yet another public "party" that got completely out of control. Tons of property was damaged, stores were vandalized and looted, and once again residents and other people that happened to be in the area were scared shitless and trapped or abused by an alcohol-crazed crowd.

At this point you might be thinking to yourself, "Where were the police? And what IS the point of this story, anyway?" (I'm getting to it, I promise.) Oh the police were there. They tossed some barriers up the night before in lieu of any plans for actual crowd control. And while the crowd broke into and pillaged the liquor store between 7th and 8th Streets, the cops were hard at work developing a "plan of action" to disperse the crowd. First, they called for back-up in the form of some helicopters so that they could monitor the activity from a safe distance. (There's a heliport a few blocks from our apartment, and it was abuzz with activity.) When the police helicopters passed over the crowd that was engaged in destroying the liquor store, they literally scattered like roaches (in the glaring searchlights) off into the alleyways and side streets. Then a bunch of cops got on their horses and started slowly moving the crowd down South Street, starting from 2nd Street and heading west, in the hopes that the mere sight of them would break up the crowd. And by a sheer stroke of luck (on everyone's part), it actually worked. All the troublemakers headed for the hills, and everyone else was left to deal with the mess they left behind.

But my real point is this: a few issues back I wrote a column about the RNC's visit to Hostile City in which I went off on a little anti-protester rant. I was subsequently chided lightly by Al Quint for my stance, and in light of the recent Mardi Gras South Street-style events, I think he may have had a point as regards one aspect of his argument. Maybe college students and other visionaries that want to spew their bullshit on the street corners in a passive way should be allowed to do so without being threatened by a police presence. In fact, maybe we should encourage it by having one of those public squares in every town where people can get up on a soapbox and speak whatever kind of drivel comes to mind. (It seems to have placated the British, yes?) All I know is there was a hell of a lot of effort put into squashing any kind of mass uprising while the convention was being held in the city, and

LESLIE GOLDMAN

there continues to be very, very little effort put into preventing the inevitable outcome when you mix large groups of teenagers and college students with alcohol and/or drug consumption, boredom, and sexual frustration. (And isn't every teenager and 20-something bored and sexually frustrated?) I wasn't in town during the convention, but from what I heard the police went out of their way to scrutinize every "counter-culture"-looking type in the area where RNC events were taking place. Among those who were most harassed were a local "gang" of anarchist puppeteers (yes, I know how silly that sounds, but that's another issue altogether) who were temporarily evicted from their work space. They may have been guilty of bad taste and poorly-executed art, but of little else. Pretty much every person that engaged in any type of illegal activity on South Street on Fat Tuesday got away with it. So I guess I should lighten up on the protesters and their idealistic but normally harmless cohorts, and get more riled up about the ignorance of the people who are paid fairly large salaries to protect the city's residents from actual threats instead of implied threats. As my husband pointed out while we were watching people loot the liquor store — maybe it's also time to rethink my stance on the NRA. ☺

I'm the editor of Carbon 14 magazine. You can contact me at C14/PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125

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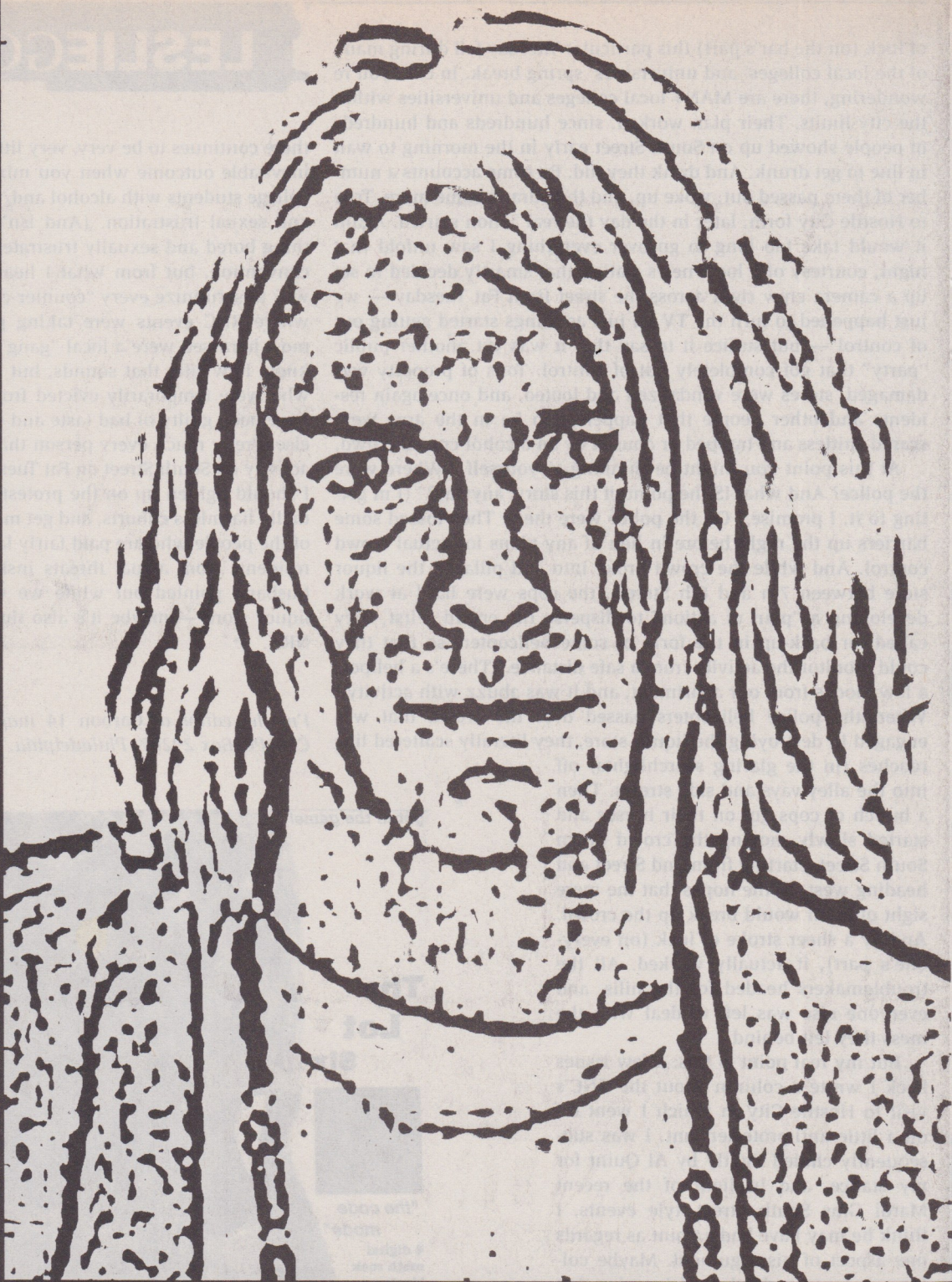
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THE DEATH OF KURT COBAIN



HAS IT BEEN SOLVED?



BY KINDRED WINEKOFF

In December 1994, Tom Grant began speaking publicly about his suspicions regarding the death of Kurt Cobain. Grant, a former detective for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and California state-licensed private investigator, was hired by Courtney Love on April 3, 1994 to find the then-missing Cobain. Five days later, Cobain's body was found dead, and the case was immediately ruled a suicide. Police, the media, and the public quickly determined that Cobain had killed himself, but Grant was confused about sev-

eral major issues surrounding the death of Cobain and the actions of several people close to him, including Love, in the final days of his life, and eventually came to the conclusion that Cobain did not commit suicide but was instead murdered.

Over the last six years, Grant has faced constant physical and legal threats, a depleted income, and immense pressure and ridicule for promoting his claim that Cobain was murdered. But recently, several independent studies have generated increased interest in his claims. First, the investigative

book *Who Killed Kurt Cobain?* by Ian Halperin and Max Wallace was published in 1998, and received much critical acclaim and modest mainstream attention. While Halperin and Wallace, investigative journalists with more than thirty years of combined experience and co-winners of the 1984 *Rolling Stone Magazine* Award for Investigative Journalism, never claimed that conclusive evidence existed which proved that Cobain was murdered, they did present a strong argument that enough circumstantial evidence was available to warrant a new

investigation into the case.

Another major source of increased publicity for Grant's murder claims was Nick Broomfield's 1998 film documentary "Kurt and Courtney," in which Grant was interviewed, alongside some of Cobain's closest friends and acquaintances. Despite the fact that Broomfield's film was not intended as an investigative piece into the death of Cobain, a large portion of the tape was dedicated to that issue. Notwithstanding Broomfield's eventual disavowal of the murder theories, which were based on weak and debatable evidence, the film raised more questions than it answered, briefed the American and British public on the existing murder theories, introduced them to characters such as El Duce (Elden Hoke), Tom Grant, and Dylan Carlson, and illustrated the hypocritical attitude of the ACLU. Whether before or since those two releases, the murder theories have been publicized on television's "Unsolved Mysteries," a VH1 special, a WorldNetDaily.com article, a *High Times* article, and countless radio and fanzine interviews and stories. Still, several questions remained unanswered, and for that reason speculation continues to run rampant.

It is certainly nothing new for the American public to be infatuated with sensationalistic stories surrounding the deaths of pop icons. Marilyn Monroe, JFK, Elvis, John Lennon, Martin Luther King, Jim Morrison, Princess Diana, and many others have been the subject of innumerable books and stories speculating about the circumstances and causes of their deaths. What is reminiscent in Cobain's case of some of the others was the shocking lack of competence (or downright deceit) of the investigating police agency (the Seattle Police Department), that agency's rigid and ridiculous refusal to allow a review of the evidence, the mysterious behavior, repeated lies, and manipulation of the media engaged in by some of the principals (Courtney Love and others surrounding her), and a large amount of unexplained or unreported physical and circumstantial evidence. None of this provides a fully convincing proof of murder, but it does create a large enough body of doubt that a new investigation may be warranted.

A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE DIS- COVERY OF COBAIN'S BODY

Tom Grant was a seven-year veteran of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department before he "burned out" and resigned. Since then, he has been a licensed private investigator in Beverly Hills for nearly a decade. On April 3, 1994, Grant was hired by

Courtney Love to track down Kurt Cobain, who had walked out of a drug rehabilitation clinic in Marina Del Rey, California on April 1. Love told Grant that someone was trying to use Cobain's credit card, and asked Grant to try to find that person, ostensibly in the hopes of finding Cobain. During this initial conversation, Grant maintains that Love also threatened Grant with legal action if he leaked the story to the press, berated Cobain's ability to take care of himself ("he can't even catch a cab by himself"), admitted planting a story in the Associated Press about a faked overdose the night before (Love claimed that the reason was to scare Cobain into contacting her), spoke bitterly of Cobain's refusal to headline the Lollapalooza tour for an estimated 9.5 million dollars, and hinted that she thought he was seeking a divorce. Love told Grant that she didn't know where Cobain was, but failed to mention that he had been seen in Seattle the previous day by the Cobains' nanny, Cali. What Grant did not know at the time was that Cobain had already begun making preparations to divorce Love, and had started drafting a new will that would effectively disown Love. According to a prenuptial agreement, Love would get nearly none of Cobain's money in the event of divorce, and Love had therefore asked Rosemary Carroll, a friend of the couple, Nirvana and Hole's managerial representative from Gold Mountain Entertainment, and the wife of poet/artist Jim Carroll, to find the "meanest, most vicious divorce lawyer" she could. This may seem ridiculous now, but as of April 1994 Love's band Hole had released only one record on an independent label, Love effectively had no acting career, and her main claim-to-fame was that she was Cobain's husband. Hole's breakthrough album, "Live Through This," would not be released until a month after Cobain's death. The divorce reports seem reasonable, as the couple had been fighting for months. This is clear from police reports describing a scuffle on June 4, 1993, after which Cobain was arrested. On March 18, 1994, less than a month before Cobain's death, Seattle Police officers entered the Cobain home to investigate a disturbance. They found Cobain locked in a closet with guns, which they promptly confiscated. Love had told police that he had threatened to kill himself, but when pressured by the authorities, she admitted that he had never made those claims. Cobain, on the other hand, insisted that he was merely trying to get away from Love. Friends of the couple, as well as a former nanny interviewed by Broomfield in his film, all maintain that the couple had been fighting for months, and many of them believe that Cobain was in the process of

leaving Love. Cobain had made plans to move away from Seattle to the East, presumably to work on a record with Michael Stipe and escape the growing pressure being placed on Nirvana.

On April 4, Grant met again with Love. Love told Grant that she had called the police and filed a missing person's report, pretending to be Kurt's mother, and Grant had discovered that someone was still trying to use Cobain's credit card. Love told Grant that Cobain was suicidal, and that "everyone thinks he's going to die." Meanwhile, Grant had subcontracted with a private investigation firm in Seattle to monitor Cobain's known hangouts, including his drug dealers. Love specifically instructed Grant not to stake out their Lake Washington home, saying that she knew he was not there, despite the fact that Cobain had been seen there the previous day. Cobain was not observed anywhere. On April 6, Grant flew to Seattle to search for Cobain, and met with Cobain's best friend, Dylan Carlson. Carlson told Grant that Cobain was not suicidal, despite the fact that he was under a lot of pressure. He also told Grant that the much-publicized "suicide attempt" in Rome in March was nothing more than an accidental overdose, a claim which was confirmed by the doctor who had treated Cobain in Rome. Carlson had bought Cobain a shotgun, which Cobain intended to use for protection, on March 30. Carlson later claimed that if he had known Cobain was suicidal, he would not have bought the gun for him.

Grant and Carlson visited the Cobain residence early in the morning on April 7. They searched the house, but did not find Cobain. Later that day, Grant claims that Love faked another overdose and was admitted into a hospital. Grant and Carlson went back to Cobain's house to look for his shotgun. Inside, they found a note from Cali to Cobain, chastising him for not contacting Love. The next morning, an electrical worker installing a security system found Cobain's body in a room above the garage. The credit card company reported that someone was still trying to use Cobain's credit card after he was found dead.

THE CRIME SCENE

Kurt Cobain was found lying on his back on the floor of the greenhouse above his garage. His hair was fanned out around him, and his skull was strangely intact, despite having been shot in the mouth with a shotgun. The gun was resting across his chest, the muzzle ending mid-torso, and a pool of partially dried blood had puddled on the side of Cobain's head. His shirtsleeves were neatly buttoned down, and an autopsy

later revealed that there were two fresh puncture marks, one on each arm. These were presumed to indicate recent intravenous drug use. A cigar box to the side of his body contained heroin, a heroin works, and some money. A half-empty Barqs root beer can lay on the floor, along with a half-filled ashtray. A potted plant stood to the side, with a note stabbed into it with a red ballpoint pen. A box of twenty-five shotgun shells was also on the floor. Three shells were missing. One round had been fired and was lodged in Cobain's skull; the other two were still in the gun. There were two entrances into the room - a set of glass, French double doors that led out to a balcony with no ground-access, and a common door which was locked from the inside. A

develop the film, much less release it (or the Polaroid's), so the only available information about the crime scene is from police reports and witness accounts.

Several things about the crime scene seem to imply a more complicated scenario. For instance, there were no fingerprints found on the shotgun used to kill Cobain. Also, the shotgun was loaded with three rounds, which seems to support the theory that Cobain had purchased the gun for protective purposes rather than suicide. Strangely, not only were no fingerprints found on the shotgun, but none were discovered on the shells or on the pen used to write the "suicide note." The two fresh puncture marks in Cobain's arms indicate that he had been administered drugs intra-

did not even examine the shotgun until a month after Cobain's death. Similarly, the SPD did not bother to investigate the credit card stolen from Cobain in the days before the discovery of his body that was used after his death, usage which ended as soon as the discovery of Cobain's body was announced. Also, as previously noted, the film from the crime scene was never developed. Other evidence makes it easy to infer that the Seattle Police Department quickly displayed a pattern of negligence early on in the investigation, and that that pattern still continues.

Matthew Richter wrote an article for WorldNetDaily.com, charging the SPD with granting Courtney Love special privileges that may have destroyed their ability to perform an objective investigation. Among



small stool stood in front of the French doors.

Some of this information was in direct contradiction to the reports that quickly surfaced in the media, as fueled by hasty and inaccurate judgments by the police. Cobain's wallet was not out with the driver's license exposed. The locked door contained a simple, "push-and-turn" style lock, which could easily have been locked by someone from the inside before walking outside and closing the door behind. The stool, which was later described in the police report as "preventing access" to the room, was a three-foot tall stool that stood in front of the balcony doors, which had no access to ground-level. In short, nothing about the crime scene itself distinguished it as a suicide scene, especially in light of the fact that many homicides are masked as suicides. Several Polaroids were taken at the crime scene, as well as several rolls of film. The Seattle Police Department refuses to even

venously twice shortly before death. In addition, the use of Cobain's credit card after his death was never properly investigated by the SPD, which is strange since it implies that someone had access to Cobain's body after his death but before the discovery of his body.

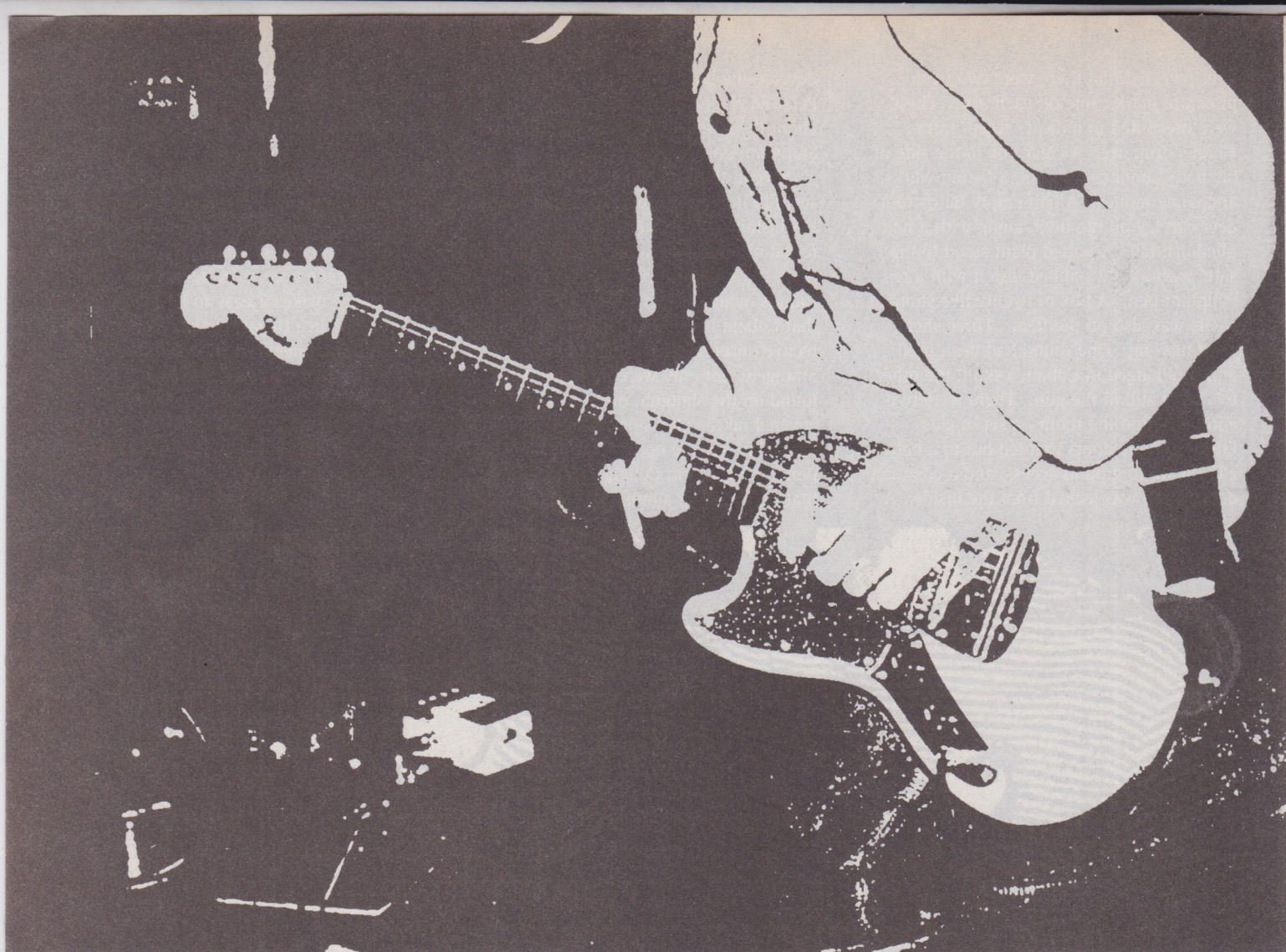
THE UNREPORTED EVIDENCE

Undoubtedly, the Cobain investigation left at least several stones unturned. Due to the nature of the case, a celebrity with a history of drug use, and several events that appeared to portray Cobain as suicidal, the Seattle Police Department rushed to improper conclusions. Several important facts about the case were not discovered until days, weeks, or months later - long after the official verdict of suicide had been reached.

For instance, as already stated, the shotgun, shells, and pen found at the scene contained no legible fingerprints. But the SPD

other things, he cited a history of preferential treatment for Love in past altercations with Cobain. Richter reports that Love, impersonating Cobain's mother in her April 4 missing person's report to the SPD, deliberately misled police by informing them that, as quoted in the police report, "Mr. Cobain ran away from California facility and flew back to Seattle...bought a shotgun and may be suicidal." This report, Richter claims, shows that Love was intentionally deceiving the SPD in at least two respects. First, by impersonating Cobain's mother, which is in fact illegal. Secondly, by giving the SPD the impression that Cobain was suicidal, when all of his friends were saying the exact opposite - that Cobain's mental state was better than it had been in years. This gave the SPD the background needed to make a hasty, and perhaps improper, verdict of suicide.

In an essay entitled "Dead Men Don't Pull Triggers," Richard Lewis' exhaustive



study of 1,526 deaths "involving blood morphine levels of intravenous heroin-related overdoses, the case is made that Cobain would not, could not, and did not kill himself with a shotgun blast to the head. According to Lewis, "other studies which were reviewed include[d] thousands of heroin-related deaths in general, over 3226 heroin-related overdoses, over 3586 suicides, 760 violent suicides, several significant staged deaths, autopsy procedures and discrepancies, postmortem pharmacokinetics of drugs, and, with respect to traces of a 'diazepam-like' substance found in Cobain's blood, several references were reviewed regarding benzodiazepines."

At least two or three days after his death, the amount of time in between Cobain's death and the discovery of his body, Kurt Cobain's blood contained 1.52 milligrams of morphine per litre (mg/L), in addition to traces of the aforementioned "diazepam-like" substance. Heroin changes into morphine when it enters the bloodstream, and it is widely known that a blood morphine level of .5 mg/L is a lethal dosage, even for a serious addict. A lethal dosage of heroin, .5 mg/L, is generally caused by injecting 75-80

mg of heroin. According to Lewis, Cobain's blood morphine level of 1.52 mg/L would indicate a dosage of 225-240 mg of heroin, a massive amount, and a lethal dosage for even a serious addict. Considering the fact that Cobain had been dead for at least three days before the examination of his blood, the approximate blood level of 1.52 mg/L is probably a low estimate of the level of morphine in his blood at the time of death. According to Lewis' essay, there has never been a reported instance of anyone with this high of a blood morphine level who has lived. Lewis maintains that Cobain would have been incapacitated, if not dead, within seconds of shooting that much heroin. This would have left Cobain with not nearly enough time to neatly pack away his heroin kit, roll down and button his shirt sleeves, position the shotgun, and fire it. "Large overdoses of heroin by heroin addicts are a phenomenon which is well understood," Lewis claims. "Research clearly shows that an overdose in the range of that received by Cobain would lead to immediate and complete incapacitation and/or immediate death. The 1.52 mg/L blood morphine level does not compensate for the presence of

diazepam, or Cobain's low body weight, both of which are well proven to substantially increase the lethality of the heroin." To back up Lewis' claims, Grant cites the fact that in many cases of heroin overdose, the victim is found with the needle still in his arm, proving that incapacitation or death often happens in a matter of seconds.

In Nick Broomfield's film "Kurt and Courtney," Broomfield challenges Lewis' findings by showing a slide of a man balancing on one leg one hour after taking twice as much morphine as Cobain. Broomfield used this to say that Cobain would have had enough time to turn a gun on himself, and, more importantly, that he would have had the ability. Tom Grant responded to Broomfield's claims by pointing out that the man on the slide had swallowed methadone, not injected heroin. Grant claims that the difference is immense. It is widely known that methadone is a much weaker drug than heroin. Methadone is often given to heroin addicts in hospitals and rehab clinics to help them overcome heroin addiction. In addition, swallowing any sort of drug is a less potent manner of administration than intravenously injecting it. Grant claimed that

Broomfield's evidence is irrelevant, since he was not dealing with the same drug, or even with the same form of administration. Heroin is stronger, faster, and deadlier than methadone, and administering a drug through intravenous injection is the most potent way to take a drug.

In his report, Lewis went even further than noting the problem posed by the blood morphine levels of Cobain. Lewis also emphasized that, in his study of thousands of drug-related deaths and suicides, not one contained the same pattern of death as Cobain - a drug overdose combined with a violent suicide. He goes on to say that "a review of cases involving homicides shows many similarities with patterns in the Cobain case." Lewis postulates that Cobain was injected, or injected himself, with the lethal dosage of heroin, was administered the benzodiazepine, and was then shot in the head in an attempt to stage a suicide.

One of the most curious aspects of the case is the note that was found at the crime scene. It was immediately assumed to be a suicide note, despite the fact that the note makes absolutely no mention of suicide. In fact, in the postscript, the only part of the note addressed to Frances or Courtney, Cobain writes, "I will be at your altar." When read in light of fact that Cobain was divorcing Courtney, had broken up Nirvana several weeks before he died, and was moving back east, this promise to, in essence, "be around," would seem to imply that Cobain was planning on living, not dying. Instead of being a suicide note, in fact, the note reads more like a rant against the things Cobain was known for ranting about: the lack of ethics in popular music, the lack of sincerity in modern rock, the media crucifixion of Love, and his own burnout. In the note, Cobain apologizes for not following the advice of his friends in the punk rock crowd who warned him of what would happen if he signed with a major label. The police report tells of a note addressed to "Cobain's wife and daughter, explaining why he had killed himself." This is simply not true. In truth, the note was addressed to "Boddah Pronounced." Boddah was the name of Cobain's childhood imaginary friend, but the inclusion of the word "pronounced" is what is really important. It is a reference to Buddhist philosophy, and means, simply, "to all who understand." Cobain was influenced, to some extent, by eastern religions, and so it is safe to assume that he was cognizant of the meaning, which may be translated to read "to my (imaginary) friends who understand." If read in this context, a note to Cobain's fans explaining the reasons why he was breaking up Nirvana, the note makes much more sense. In fact, a week or two

before he died, Cobain had called up Nirvana bassist Krist Noveselic and told him that he was leaving the band. Nevertheless, the note was immediately assumed to be a suicide note by the police and the media.

In the film "Kurt and Courtney," Nick Broomfield also introduces us to Elden Hoke, otherwise known as El Duce, lead singer of the sloppy Los Angeles shock-punk band, the Mentors. The Mentors were well known for their debauched songs and live shows, and Hoke was a well-known alcoholic. In Broomfield's film, Hoke claims that Courtney Love offered him 50,000 dollars to kill Cobain. Broomfield takes Hoke's claim as it should be taken - with little more than a grain of salt. But in investigating Hoke's claim, which is confirmed by a coworker who witnessed the exchange between Hoke and Love, Broomfield hired one of the world's top polygraph examiners, an expert who instructs the FBI Academy on how to perform lie detector tests. Hoke was tested twice, and each time passed "beyond any doubt." Eight days after telling his story

to Broomfield, Hoke was found laying dead on train tracks. His friends say that earlier that day, an unknown stranger approached Hoke and offered to buy him a drink. Hoke, a heavy alcoholic, hesitated to accept the offer, and was never seen alive again. Hoke's friends believe that he was murdered for telling his story to Broomfield.

Whether or not Kurt Cobain was actually murdered is, at this time, impossible to conclusively determine. What can be determined clearly and without doubt is 1) that the Seattle Police Department displayed an embarrassing lack of competence by failing to properly investigate the case, and 2) that sufficient conflicting evidence exists to warrant a new investigation, one conducted by an outside source. The FBI would seem to be the prime candidate, since evidence of a police misconduct or conspiracy may be present. So far, though, no other law enforcement agency has attempted to further investigate the Seattle Police Department or the questionable facts surrounding the death of Kurt Cobain. +

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HIT SQUAD

Things must be slow around here. The most excitement I've had recently is a tennis match last night with a bat in my kitchen. Though my game was rusty, I eventually pulled away a victory, in the process pulverizing a ceiling light fixture. Surprisingly, my four-year old daughter, far from being traumatized, found the unexpected action hilarious. In observing the post-midnight mayhem (well, the overturned aftermath) that woke her up, she repeatedly teased, "Daddy, you're just like the Three Stooges."

JUKEBOX JURY

by jeff jarema

More rock 'n' roll excitement from the suburbs. *Hit List* columnist Sleazegrinder finds it all a massive bore, dubbing me "grandfatherly" (*HL* volume two, number four). True, I don't cut much of a punk figure these days, but I was the one that made that point in the first place. Where I singularly take offense to that Sleazegrinder column was not in his attack on me, but on my "Goddamn jukebox." Moreover, Sleaze takes a condescending attitude towards those damn records that get crammed into its beer-stained carriage. Maybe I'm missing something, but this just seems like a real asinine attitude. Does this person speak for a contingency of *Hit List* reactionaries that I hadn't previously considered, tough guys 'n' gals who are too cool for records and jukeboxes?

Currently, my top faves on wax are a tie between two acts from the same almighty era ('64-'65), though "cool" by two distinctly different definitions. The Pretty Things sported the longest hair on the planet back when it meant something (unlike today), namely an invitation for an ass kicking. This aspect of their image, sewn to a savage, smashing R&B-based sound, lent itself well to an overall career of rebellion. It has never really ended (they continue to record, tour, and misbehave four decades later), but the revolution in sound that they unleashed on the heels of the earliest Stones is currently the subject of some absolutely mindblowing repackages.

Norton Records has just reissued the Pretties' self-titled '65 debut and follow-up, "Get The Picture?", as well as a singles-only collection, "Midnight To Six", that ranks as even more raucous since it includes such

pile-driving pre-punkers as "Rosalyn", "Don't Bring Me Down", their namesake song, and "Come See Me" (my favorite single of all-time). These three records are collectively positioned as the reissue campaign of the year, a claim that will stand even against rumoured Rolling Stones album overhauls.

Packaged in the glossiest, fattest sleeves and thickest, loudest vinyl, they also benefit from photo-packed gatefold spreads and energetic, on the money liner notes from *HL* contributor Mike Stax. While Norton conveniently sidestepped the Pretty Things' floral, post-rave "Emotions" LP ('67; hey, why not at least a 7" EP of "Death Of A Socialite"/"The Sun"/"My Time" + one other?), also in the racks is a 10", 4-song roundup of EMI era fuzz-soaked psychedelia titled "Defecting Grey" that, despite an unusually uninspired sleeve by Norton/Pretties standards (leave it to the *Kicks* couple to mute the paisley), is further evidence of brilliance. I've been digging the Pretty Things for decades, and must say that the initial impact of their '64-'65 recordings remains undiminished by time or taste. These Norton deluxe vinyl slabs only enhance the experience.

Along with the long-haired reprobate Pretty Things, the other top dog here, whether on the Wurlitzer or the household hi-fi, is Georgie Fame & the Blue Flames. Now, Georgie has cut a lot of records from what I can ascertain, but it's his early recordings released Stateside on the long-gone Imperial label that I'm digging. As his name suggests, Georgie is no punk. In fact, punks would really hate him. Just check out his monumentally square-looking "Yeh Yeh" LP cover. That Ivy League aura with smug mug must've

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JEFF JAREMA

made for a dart board in at least one rotting, underground record shop. Georgie doesn't even play rock 'n' roll in the standard sense. After all, in his heyday he didn't even employ a guitar player, just credibly jazzy horn & rhythm sections (including a conga player) to back his hi-energy Hammond organ. Despite the heavy jazz leanings, he described his upbeat sound way back when as "rock-house".

While the Pretty Things and Stones were drawing inspiration from Chicago blues, Georgie was instead paying homage to Chess soul. Though the Blue Flames eventually got canned by the man, even Fame's lesser "Get Away" solo longplayer features some suitably sublime soul ("Sweet Thing", "Funny", "Sitting In The Park") alongside the studio session stiffness. Both Imperial LP's are a steal on eBay, so get 'em if you got soul.

'Til the end of time, people will go on defending Paul Revere & the Raiders. I don't see the point 'cause their coolness seems beyond debate. In their Revolutionary-era get-ups, they made a few thousand times more sense than later punk clowns like the Misfits (OK, maybe by '67 their uniforms looked more as if they were designed by Liberace's people than by Betsy Ross). For newcomers, the best place to start is 'The Essential Ride, '63-67' (assembled by the Sundazed crew under the auspices of Sony; probably already out of print), as it features all the killer hits ("Just Like Me", "Stepping Out", "Kicks", etc.) and an amazing unreleased "Aftermath"-style extended space-out version of "The Great Airplane Strike".

Another 'Essential' track rescued from Sony's trash heap was the previously undocumented ode to unsafe sex, "Crisco Party". On Sundazed's latest Raider root, the 2-CD "Mojo Workout" (more '64), they not only collect this frat opus again but include a well-

greased live shot of the early Raiders with Mad Man Marcus Lindsay crooning from the interior of his very own "crisco party" trash can (which, obviously, is where they found the tape). For the most mauled New Orleans R&B covers, get this action-overbrimming disc.

Other quality efforts out there include the Standells' surprisingly listenable 35 year reunion at Cavestomp ("Ban This!", Varese Sarabande) and one that I must've missed from last year; a fab Phil Smee-designed double LP by Euro modbeat semi-stars the Smoke ("My Friend Jack", Retroactive). Fans of Pete Townshend-style vintage guitar pyrotechnics will dig most of this, despite the presence of a singer that sounds about as punk as Billy Joe Royal on several cuts.

Lastly, to plug Sundazed once more (with justification), they seem to be relaunching the Stax/Volt label on 180 grams of fattening vinyl, beginning with several must-have Booker T & the MG's classics, including their landmark "Soul Dressing" LP.

I returned to the airwaves last month, so I guess that now makes me an on-air semi-regular. This time, I hauled a mountain of my departed brother Dave's CDs to WXYC (UNC-Chapel Hill) for a tribute to my all-time favorite rock 'n' roller. Besides effortless nods to hipness (the Seeds, early Alice Cooper, etc.), I likewise honored the uncool that's still worth standing behind, at least in small doses, such as Grand Funk Railroad, Rod Stewart, and even Jethro Tull (two cuts, no less). I had a blast. +

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the **Queers**



THE QUEERS by Glenn Shires **TODAY**

As one of punk rock's most enduring bands, it's amazing how often the Queers experience a massive personnel shakeup. The past year has been especially turbulent, with the addition of an entirely new rhythm section, not to mention the tragic death of longtime drummer Hugh O'Neil. Despite the bleak turn of events, frontman Joe Queer has soldiered on to bring us *Beyond The Valley of the Assfuckers*, his raunchiest album yet. Combining equal parts of the early Queers' raw insolence with the Ramones/Beach Boys-inspired elements of their later work, it's the perfect blend of everything that makes the Queers great. Former lead screamer Wimpy even returns to croon his way through two of the album's most uproarious tracks, "Stupid Fucking Vegan" and "I Just Called To Say Fuck You." With *Beyond The Valley*, it's clear that the gritty, biting satire and lewd irreverence that have long lurked beneath the surface of Joe Queer's exterior are back out in the open where they belong. In case you were wondering, that's a good thing. Throughout the years, Joe Queer has seemingly been interviewed for every punk rock zine on the planet, yet only a few such articles attempt to offer a comprehensive history of the Queers. I met up with Joe at Portland's Pine Street Theater (formerly known as The Paradigm, formerly known as The Womb, formerly known as La Luna, formerly known as...the Pine Street Theater) with the intention of doing the "definitive Queers interview." Whether or not I succeeded is open to debate, but he was more than happy to field my questions and definitely eager to talk about the state of punk rock today. Ladies and gentlemen, without further ado, Joe fucking Queer...



Glenn Shires: I'd like to know how the Queers first got together, so I'll start off with the basics. What inspired you to start playing punk rock?

Joe Queer: We got together because we were all into Black Flag and the Ramones and shit. Then we heard the Meatmen's "Crippled Children Suck". I remember listening to it and sitting around drinking beer with Tulu and Wimpy, the guys I started the band with. We were like, "Man, we're better than this and we don't even have a fucking band! Let's get going!" We all fooled around with different instruments, so we started the band...kinda to drink beer, or rather to justify the fact that we'd get together to rehearse and drink beer as opposed to hanging around the bar rooms and drinking beer [laughs]. It was just a fun thing to do.

GS: How long had you been playing the guitar when you formed the Queers?

Joe: Hmm, maybe a year or so. I hadn't been playing much at all.

GS: What year did the Queers get started, and how old were you at the time?

Joe: 1981. We were all in high school back then. And we were really only together for about six months. I didn't get the Queers going again until the late 1980s, but the original Queers released two 7 inch records and people remembered us from that. We had enough material for an album, but we didn't record it until 1993 or 1994 for *A Day Late And A Dollar Short*. I had a couple of old rehearsal tapes from when we taught this kid our bass parts for a gig with G.G. Allin. We were yelling out all the chord changes. It was a good-quality tape, so me, B-Face and Hugh could re-learn the parts really easily.

GS: How did you decide on the Queers for a name?

Joe: We were trying to think of a name that would be offensive to the big "art fag" community where we're from in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. We were really stuck on calling ourselves the Black Ramones...you know, for Black Flag and the Ramones. Then I thought of the Queers and we just laughed our asses off. We were like, "That's it!" We'd go do graffiti around town [laughing] like we were a big deal!

GS: "The Queers" is a name that

aggravates people from all walks of life. That's why I think it's such a funny name.

Joe: Yeah, people remember it too, so it's a good name and we stuck with it. Some people still get upset about it. Like tonight, I was out on the sidewalk when some guys pulled up and were like, "The Queers? Does that mean you're gay?" I was like, "Sure, whatever. Are you looking for a date?"

GS: How many copies of the first two 7 inches were pressed?

Joe: 200 each. I pressed 'em up. We had no money. It was back in the day and there was no hope of...I remember talking to SST and they were like, "Yeah, we're into it but we're busy." So 200 was all we could afford.

GS: How much do those records sell for now? Can you even find copies anymore?

Joe: I've seen 'em go for \$400 or \$500. I don't have any, though. I'm not into collecting. I had a few and I gave 'em away to people who collect.

GS: How many shows did the original Queers play?

Joe: Maybe five.

GS: How did audiences react to you at the time?

Joe: It's hard to describe. It's not arrogance or conceit, but even back then we felt like we had a pretty good little band. I mean Screeching Weasel, Teengenerate, and the New Bomb Turks each covered a song from our second 7 inch. And the audiences...y'know, kids liked us. But it was so long ago, we were gigging with G.G. Allin and shit because he was from New Hampshire. It was before G.G. really did anything. It was like '82-'83.

GS: Do you ever run into people who say, "Hey, I saw you play in 1982!"

Joe [laughing]: Once in awhile back in Portsmouth, some old dude will come up and be like [in a gravelly, drunken voice], "I saw you play at a fuckin' pool party!" A lot of people back home are psyched to see the Queers do well.

GS: What did you do between 1984 and

1990? Were the Queers on hold during that entire time?

Joe: I travelled out west to California and Hawaii. Wimpy and Tulu went off and did their stuff. Yeah, I wanted to play but I was out west and not doing shit. Y'know, we broke up until the late '80s when I met Hugh, my drummer who recently passed away, and we started gigging in Boston as the Queers. We didn't do much; we never toured or anything. We recorded the stuff that would later come out on *Grow Up*. Then we stopped for like a year. We didn't play in 1989 at all. I hooked up with Hugh again in late 1990 and we met B-Face [longtime bassist] at a Social Distortion show. I said, "Hugh, let's start a new band." And he said, "Let's do the Queers. We always loved the Queers." We believed in it. No matter what lineup we had, we always felt we were onto something. Then we met Ben Weasel and got on Lookout. I had a restaurant back then; a cafe. That's what I thought I'd do with my life. It just worked out that we did one tour with Screeching Weasel and recorded *Love Songs For The Retarded*. I thought, "Geez, we might be able to keep touring." We still believed in the band. No matter who we played with, we felt we were the best band...Well, we might not have been the best band when we opened for the Ramones [laughing]! We weren't! But we felt like it, you know what I mean? It wasn't conceit or arrogance, but just a strong belief in ourselves. So after that first tour we just kept on going.

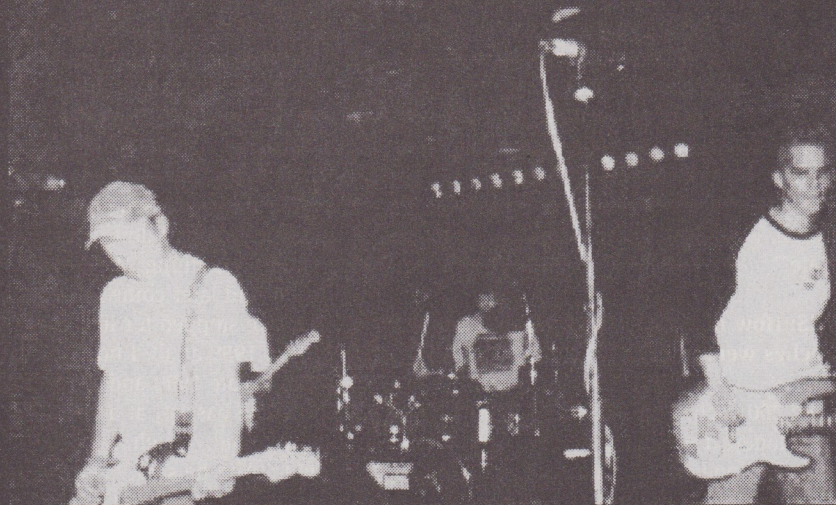
GS: What did you do while you lived out west in the '80s?

Joe: Washed dishes, surfed, worked for my brother in Manhattan Beach. I saw a lot of bands out there, too.

GS: Was that a big influence when you came back? Were you more excited to keep playing?

Joe: I'd also gone and lived out west in 1979 after high school. I got to see Black Flag, the Germs, all the great West Coast bands. Then I went back to Boston and at The Rat we'd get the Ramones, Blondie, Talking Heads...all the big New York bands would come up. So it was good, I got to see all that music.

GS: Tell me more about you and Hugh getting together. It sounds like that's



when the Queers really got into the swing of things.

Joe: I met him down in Boston. There was a big loose-knit community of musicians. He was a drummer that this kid Kevin knew. I remember I met him and he didn't smile once. He just said, "What time do you need me?", and then agreed to come down and jam. We got to be pretty good friends. We travelled the world together and shit. But really, the band didn't do anything until we got the fuck out of there and got on Lookout Records.

GS: What happened to Wimpy during that time?

Joe: Well, he couldn't sing the melodic stuff, so we had to dump him. We were going into "Debra Jean" and "Daydreaming" and shit like that. The last tunes we did with Wimpy were "Nobody Likes Me" and "Bonehead" and that was it. We wanted to get more melodic, so I sang.

GS: How long was your restaurant around?

Joe: Four years, from 1990 to 1994.

GS: Did it close down when you started touring for Lookout?

Joe: Yeah, I signed it to my partner after two years. I just said fuck it and never went back. I really haven't worked much since then.

GS: *Grow Up* [The Queers' first full-length LP] sounds like it was recorded

over a long period of time.

Joe: Some of it was done in 1986 and 1987. We just had it sitting around. Hugh knew a label over in Europe, Shakin' Street, and they wanted to put it out. We took three different sessions and mixed them together to make a full album. I wish we would have re-recorded it as one session when we re-released it on Lookout, but it was our favorite for a long time. I love that album.

GS: There must have been a lot of different people who recorded *Grow Up* with you. Does Hugh play on the whole thing?

Joe: Hugh wasn't on all of it. I had these guys from a band called the Piranha Brothers. It depended on who I was fighting with. We're all drug addicts and alcoholics, so we're all fucked up. It was like, "This guy burned me for \$25, so he's not playing. We'll use this other guy!"

GS: The story I've heard is that when *Grow Up* first came out on Shakin' Street, you sent a copy to Ben Weasel and things took off from there.

Joe: We were really into *Boogada Boogada Boogada*

[Screeching Weasel's second album]. We used to go up to the UNH radio station where they had the original pressing. It had this phone number on it which said "call for booking." We were drunk and we were so into Screeching Weasel, but they weren't even together at the time. It must have been 1991. So anyway, I got a call back. I got home one time and I was like, "B-Face! Ben Weasel called my house!", and we couldn't believe it. Then I sent him the *Grow Up* album, and he sent me back this thick envelope. I was scared to open it. I thought, "Ben Weasel hates my band! I'm gonna be crushed!" Then I finally realized, "Geez, the guy's not gonna take six pages to call me an asshole and put my band down," so that's how we became friends. Then Larry Livermore [founder of Lookout Records] got them back together to do *My Brain Hurts*. They hooked us up with Lookout and we did *Love Songs For The Retarded* and toured with them. They were the first non-California band on Lookout and we were the second.

GS: Did you start touring for Lookout as soon as they signed you?

Joe: We did one tour with Screeching Weasel and we did a tour on our own. Then we went out and did some two-week tours by ourselves and then a couple

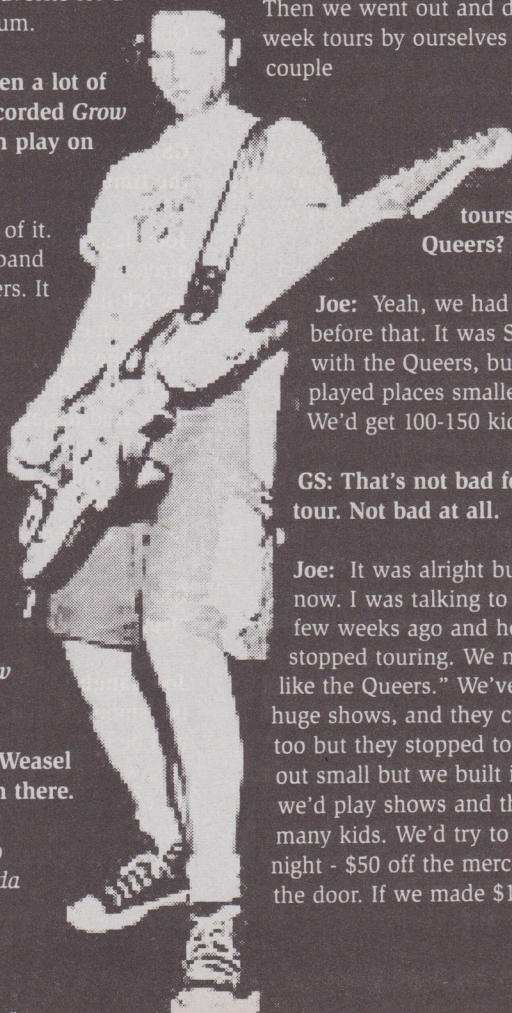
with Rancid.

GS: Were those your first tours with the Queers? How did it go?

Joe: Yeah, we had never toured before that. It was Screeching Weasel with the Queers, but we fuckin' played places smaller than this room. We'd get 100-150 kids.

GS: That's not bad for your first tour. Not bad at all.

Joe: It was alright but nothing like now. I was talking to Ben Weasel a few weeks ago and he said, "Joe, we stopped touring. We never did shows like the Queers." We've played some huge shows, and they could have done it too but they stopped touring. We started out small but we built it up. Sometimes we'd play shows and there wouldn't be many kids. We'd try to make \$100 a night - \$50 off the merch and \$50 from the door. If we made \$100, we figured



we could make it to the next town. It really took off when Lookout released *Love Songs* and *Beat Off*, and when we toured with Rancid and Screeching Weasel. We built it up through touring, which I don't think you can do now. There are so many more bands now. When Green Day and Rancid hit it big, even though they were off Lookout by then, everyone started paying attention to Lookout Records and we had that identity. We were lucky back then to have that niche. I see a lot of bands like the Groovie Choulies and the Nobodys. They tour, tour, tour, but I almost think it hurts 'em to tour that much...y'know, playing the same places all the time. I'd rather keep it special and go out once or twice a year.

GS: Do you think that people take it for granted if their favorite bands are always playing live?

Joe: Oh yeah, I think so. And there are so many bands that the kids eventually just get burned out.

GS: How much financial assistance did you get from Lookout on those early tours? Did they help you much on the road?

Joe: They'd front us the T-shirts. Back in those days, we'd start a tour with three boxes of shirts. We bought a van, but they didn't have to front us money or anything. They agreed to cover us for the shirts and we'd pay them later. That was on a small scale. Now when we go out, it costs \$25,000 for T-shirts and shit! Back then it was like, "We owe Lookout \$1500 for T-shirts, dude! We'd better watch it!" So we'd come home from a tour with two or three hundred bucks. We started doing better and the thing was, it was like a big party for us. We didn't know anything about record labels. We only got together to drink beer and piss my mom off when we played in the basement...and, of course, we'd try to meet girls, which we never did

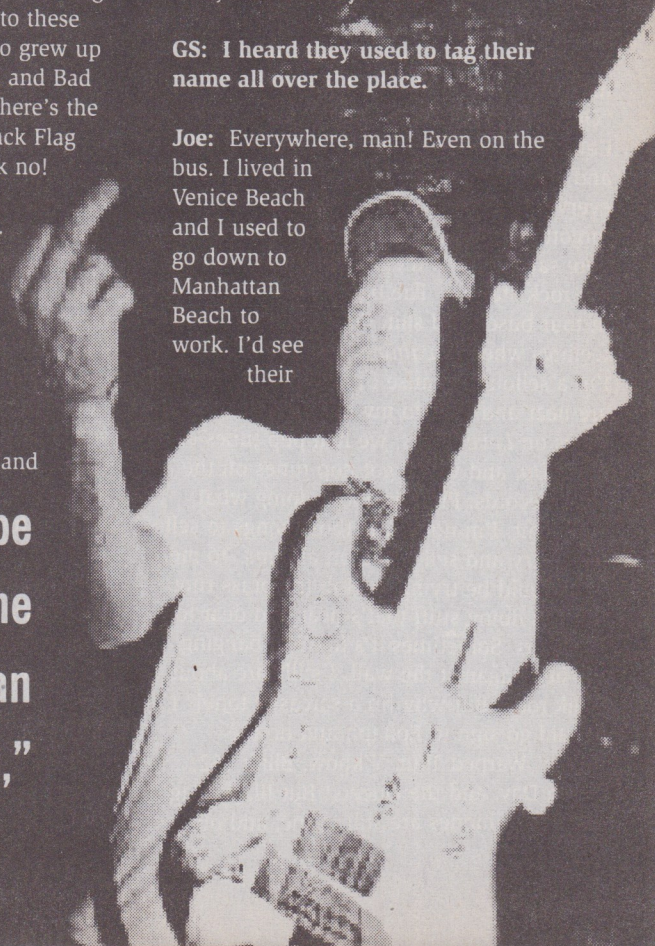
because they were too smart to come near us! All of a sudden we were touring and kids would show up. It would be a Tuesday night and there would be 400 kids out there [laughing]. We'd be, "Fuck, man, I'm too fucked up to play!" It was weird getting to the level we're at now. We didn't expect to have kids come up and ask for autographs. I see a lot of people starting bands now who have seen the success of Green Day, the Offspring and Rancid. They're aiming for that level of success, whereas we were innocent. We wanted to play with Screeching Weasel once in Chicago and we wanted to put out one great punk rock album, *Love Songs For The Retarded*. We had it in us, but we didn't know anything about touring. We didn't know about getting royalty checks and living off our music. It's great, but we had none of those fuckin' expectations. That was a fantasy, not even a dream. We thought that could never happen. To be able to travel around the world, make a few bucks, do interviews, and sign autographs, it was just like...aw, fuckin' gravy! Whereas nowadays some people get together, I'll talk to 'em and they go, "We sell so many T-shirts..." It's like a business to them. I see all these bands on Fat and Epitaph, and I gotta tell you that I'm friends with a lot of 'em. But I listen to 'em and I think, "Did Black Flag and the Ramones ever happen? Did it ever fucking happen? No, it never happened to these guys!" They're fuckin' jocks who grew up on metal and saw fuckin' NOFX and Bad Religion get popular. And then there's the Warped Tour. I mean, would Black Flag ever play the Warped Tour? Fuck no! If you saw Black Flag, you felt like you were part of something. The same with the Dead Kennedys or the fuckin' Angry Samoans. And that's gone. To me, punk is so empty now. And I fuckin' have a vendetta against *Maximum Rock'n'Roll* because they reviewed our last album, *Punk Rock Confidential*, and

they said, "Joe Queer's the latest punk rocker to try to grab the brass ring and sell out." And I'm thinking, "Son of a bitch!" I've turned down the Warped Tour, which would allow us to sell more albums. We're not on Fat or Epitaph, and I got offered that. We keep our ticket prices at \$7-\$8. Sometimes we do \$10 because we have to, but they call me a sellout. I feel like telling them, "Go pick on the fuckin' bands on Fat and Epitaph! Don't pick on me! I'm down in the trenches with the boys!" I'm not Anti-Flag on the Warped Tour. Those guys are all political - and I like Anti-Flag and it's good for them, I guess - but they care about all this political shit and they're at a show where they're selling \$5 Pepsis and \$4 bottled waters. It just ain't punk! Fuck you! I'm fuckin' punk, y'know? I'm working class. I work for my brother on his fishing boat when I'm not doing music. I don't have to, but I do. It's too much of a warped sense of reality to be out here on the road doing interviews and signing autographs. Then you start thinking that you're important. Then you start thinking you're doing everybody a favor to walk on stage and play your stupid fuckin' tunes, and you act like you're so much smarter than everyone else. And I'm not, y'know what I mean? When I saw Black Flag...I gotta tell you, when I went out west to Manhattan Beach I'd see Black Flag shit everywhere. Everywhere!

GS: I heard they used to tag their name all over the place.

Joe: Everywhere, man! Even on the bus. I lived in Venice Beach and I used to go down to Manhattan Beach to work. I'd see their

"Ben Weasel hates my band! I'm gonna be crushed!" Then I finally realized, "Geez, the guy's not gonna take six pages to call me an asshole and put my band down,"



name everywhere. I had some of the early singles, but I didn't even know what they looked like. I'd never seen 'em. Then I went to a fuckin' show, and I thought it was gonna be a cross between pro wrestlers and the fuckin' Ramones in leather jackets. You know what I mean, like, "Don't fuck with us!" But it was four dudes as skinny as me, Tulu, and Wimpy! Fuck, man! That inspired the early Queers. There was no distance between them and the audience. The crowds were part of the show. Hell, they were the show! The bands were almost secondary. It was just so empowering to say, "That was fuckin' Black Flag!" On the other hand, the Ramones were gods, although I got to know them later and they were just normal dudes. But it took a long time for me to be able to talk to them normally.

GS: Was it harder to think of the Ramones as regular people because they were the "founding fathers" so to speak?

Joe: It had to be. They were such great fuckin' songwriters. They were punk rock and that was it. Sure, there were the Sex Pistols and I'm not downplaying that, but the Ramones were the Ramones. I'm calling Joey to see if he'll come to our show at The Continental in three weeks. And I've called him a few times, but I'm still fuckin' nervous when I do it. I think, "This is Joey Ramone, the king of punk rock!" But seeing Black Flag, it was like, "Oh fuck, that's Black Flag!" That whole California scene was great, with the DK's and shit. Now with the Warped Tour and everything, it seems like everybody's forgotten all that stuff. And I'm always out here saying "fuck the Warped Tour." It's too rock star-ish. The bands have to travel in tour buses and shit. So it really hurt my feelings when *Maximum Rock'n'Roll* said I'm a sellout, because I play pop tunes that are near and dear to my heart. We had pop tunes on *Love Songs*, we had pop tunes on *Grow Up*, and we've got pop tunes on the other records. Punk is about doing what you want. I'm not doing those songs to sell out or try and sell a million albums. To me, that would be trying to grab the brass ring. But I'm doing stuff that's near and dear to my heart. Sometimes it's like I'm banging my head against the wall. I still care about punk rock. But why [in a sarcastic tone]? I should go sign to Epitaph and do the fuckin' Warped Tour. Y'know, Blink 182, Green Day, and the Queers! But Black Flag and the Ramones are still in me, and our

level of success - well, some people might not call it success, but it is to me - is the right fuckin' level for me. I'm happy to be at this level. You gotta be your own person. That whole Warped Tour thing is just weird to me.

GS: A few minutes ago, you said that Green Day's success had an effect on Lookout Records. When Green Day's first major label record started selling, a lot of their new fans wanted to hear their earlier Lookout material...

Joe: They did, yeah.

GS: A lot of those same people must have become interested in other Lookout bands. Did the "Green Day mania/punk rock explosion of 1994" help the Queers?

Joe: Yes, it helped a lot. It really started with Nirvana, and then later Green Day, the Offspring, Rancid, etc. It definitely helped the Lookout scene.

GS: Do you think it helped the punk scene as a whole? And by that, I mean were more people coming to shows, buying T-shirts, buying records, and so forth? Not just for the Queers, but for punk bands in general?

Joe: Punk became more visible in some ways. But at the same time, the bonehead quotient went way the fuck up. A lot of jocks showed up. There's a price to pay for everything. That's why I'd hate to do the Warped Tour. We'd get more fans, but a lot of 'em would be assholes. To me, the audience and most of the bands on the Warped Tour look like the jocks who beat me up in high school [laughing]. Y'know, I didn't like 'em then and I don't like 'em now. Plus, the Warped Tour seems like such a clique. Being into punk rock used to mean you were the outcast. You had nowhere else to go! Back then, like in high school, we'd always think we were smarter than the other kids but we didn't quite know why. Then punk rock happened, and that's where we all ended up.

GS: I actually went to the Warped Tour this year. I really wanted to see TSOL, Green Day, Zeke, Good Riddance, and a few others...

Joe: Oh yeah, I'd go to see fuckin' Avail and Green Day! They do have lots of good bands. And I fuckin' love Anti-Flag too. I shouldn't single them out.

GS: But I agree with some of those points you made about "jock types" at the Warped Tour. The Donnas played right before NOFX, and all the fucking NOFX fans spent the entire set booing and chanting "NOFX!" while throwing shit at the Donnas...garbage, shoes, water bottles, you name it. It was really fucked up. I don't think it's NOFX's fault, but it says a lot about the people they attract.

Joe: We played with NOFX once and we came out slamming! But we just got laughed at, and this was a place we'd sold out before, The Trocadero in San Francisco. They had the place booked and we said, "Sure, we'll open for NOFX." I like NOFX, but some of their fans have nothing to do with punk.

GS: You played a couple shows with Strung Out on this current tour. Was it anything like playing with NOFX? It seems like Strung Out might attract a similar crowd.

Joe: We played four shows with Strung Out. It was weird, but the kids all know us. Even the kids who didn't come to see us have heard a few tunes and they've seen our shirts all over the place. They kind of accept us, but the music is so different. Strung Out opened for us at two shows and we opened for them at the other two, and they were cool. We might go out with them in the spring. They're cool guys. The music is totally different, but we seem to get along. It was just weird because we're used to headlining all our shows. Our booking agent is always saying, "You should go out with NOFX. They'd love to have you! Or Horton Heat or Social D..." But the Queers ain't gonna win anybody over at a NOFX show. And Horton Heat or Social Distortion - that fuckin' tough guy, fuckin' rockabilly "us against the world" stuff - we're not gonna win over their crowd. We aren't gonna sing "I Don't Wanna Be A Granola Head" to those fuckin' people, I mean, I like those bands, but if we played those shows we'd be telling our fans we're gonna suck any dick that's dangling in front of us to fuckin' sell out. And that's what you're saying when you go on the Warped Tour. You lose all "street cred" with me. "Oh yeah, I'm all anti-government, hate the police, and all that shit. But I'll still go play a show where they're selling \$5 Pepsis and fucking the audience up the ass?" No way. I'm not doing shows where people who want to see my band have to pay \$25 to get in. I'm just not into it. I like the

Donnas and I like most of the bands that played the Warped Tour this year, but what the fuck? I don't know... [he trails off]

GS: Working backwards a little bit here, I noticed that right around the same time that Green Day and those other bands were all the rage [circa 1994-95], you guys had a lot of EPs out on different labels. Did the overall popularity of punk rock lead to more of a demand for Queers recordings?

Joe: At the time, no. We just needed to put stuff out so we could sell something on the road. Through Weasel, we hooked up with Clearview and Selfless. Woundup Records was run by a friend of ours. I can't even remember all the labels, but we mainly did it to sell records at shows.

GS: Here's something that I've always admired about the Queers: It's no secret that you've had lots of different members, but it hasn't ever slowed you down. What is the trick to keeping a band together for two decades?

Joe [laughing]: I don't know. I've been trying to figure it out! You see, Tulu, me and Wimpy started the whole thing. Then in the late '80s it was a loose collective with me, Hugh, J.J. Rassler, and a bunch of others. We did some recording, but we weren't really together. We'd play a few gigs here and there. Me, B-Face, and Hugh were the steadiest lineup [in the early to mid '90s] until Hugh got sick and B-Face went off with the Ghoulies and we split with Lookout. After that, I got Dave from Jon Cougar Concentration Camp. He's been with me for two years. Justin [aka "Lurch"] from the Nobodys is now on drums, and this kid Isaac went to Europe with us to play bass. I want to keep a steady lineup, so hopefully these guys will stay.

GS: Wimpy still plays with you now and then. Is he joining you on this tour?

Joe: No, but he came to Europe with us and we encored with him. We thought about flying him out here to encore for a couple shows, but the kids here don't know him very well. A lot of these kids are into "Punk Rock Girls" and the poppier stuff we've done, so they just don't like him! Well, some kids do. He sang with us at Gilman once a few years ago, but we couldn't do it on this tour. He works a regular job and has a couple of kids. He was psyched to go to Europe. He'd never

been there. Over there, we draw really well, especially in Italy. Every show was packed. He was like, "I can't believe this!" Meanwhile the crowd was chanting "Wimpy! Wimpy!," because they know the early Queers stuff very well. So it was cool. We bought his plane ticket and he was so excited I don't think he slept at all during the time we were there. Some people say, "Oh, I don't want to go to Europe," and I reply, "You don't even know how fuckin' lucky you are! You're as uneducated as a hog and you should be working at the Burger King drive-up window! Paper or plastic, ma'am?" I mean, come on, let's be realistic. None of us went to college - not me, Hugh, or B-Face, anyway - so it's

refreshing to see the new guys really being into it.

GS: Like you said, you've seen big lineup changes in the past few years. Like with B-Face leaving, and of course Hugh's unfortunate passing...

Joe: Yeah, he died [of a brain tumor]. Then I got Chris and Dave from Jon Cougar, along with some different drummers for a little while - Joe from the Devil Dogs, Steve from Darlington - but we just couldn't find the right one. Lurch really works out well because the Nobodys toured with the Queers a lot in the early days and he knew Hugh, so there's a good



"It was weird getting to the level we're at now. We didn't expect to have kids come up and ask for autographs."

connection. Hugh showed Lurch a lot of stuff on drums. He knows our stuff, so he plays it really well. Chris is now in the Dwarves, but Dave's still here and Isaac's on bass. We'll see how it goes. Vapid from Screeching Weasel has talked to us about doing stuff.

GS: That would be cool.

Joe: Yeah, because he's not going to play with Screeching Weasel again. So we'll see. The people I play with are all friends I've known throughout the years.

GS: I hope I'm not getting into a forbidden topic, but would you care to comment on what happened with B-Face? Why did he leave?

Joe: Basically, me and Hugh got fucked up on drugs and B-Face was drinking like a fish. So at the time, me and Hugh went to rehab and B-Face went off. He said, "The Groovie Ghoulies need a bass player and they asked me," and I said, "Go for it." So he left and I didn't hear from him for a long time. I got kind of pissed off. I got these other kids [two members of New Hampshire's amazing Useless Fucks!] to help me on the "Everything's OK" EP. I felt like it was a slap in the face because he didn't keep in touch, but B-Face never

does. He stayed with the Ghoulies and I kind of shafted him by getting different people. I'm not gonna fuckin' beg. I'm not going to kiss his ass and be like, "Come on dude, are you playing?" I just didn't feel like he appreciated it enough, but maybe he did. That's just my opinion. I love B-Face like a brother. We still get along and it's all water under the bridge. We've talked about doing a side project with me, him, Tulu, and Wimpy. I already did a side project with the original Queers—Tulu and Wimpy—called the Drunken Cholos. It's an eight song EP coming out on Hopeless in the fall.

GS: The Drunken Cholos also have one song on a compilation CD, right?

Joe: Right, we do. So I asked B-Face if he wanted to do it and he said yeah, so we'll get together. It's just a matter of when he's around. I still miss him, but the band plays really well and it's just time to move on. I fought with Lookout and Hugh and B-Face, but friends always fight, y'know? We've gotten past it and he's doing fine. We're not going to do the Drunken Cholos this time. We're going to do a band called the Ozark Mountain Faggots. It will just be me, Tulu, Wimpy, and B-Face. It'll be kind of obnoxious, but it'll also be fun.

GS: Does anyone give you a hard time about B-Face leaving? I wondered because on the new record, your hypothetical smartass "fan" in the last song says, "The Nobodys are my favorite band now that B-Face left the Queers."

Joe: Some kids have said it, but it's not really a problem because the band sounds good. It really sounds like the Queers, and they know me as the frontman. Some people don't think it's really the Queers without B-Face and Hugh, and some people don't think it's really the Queers without Tulu and Wimpy! But the band sounds good and that's what matters.

GS: When I interviewed you two years ago for my old zine, it sounded like there was no love lost between you and Lookout. Then they released *Later Days And Better Lays* [a collection of demos and b-sides]. Did you owe them another album for contractual reasons?

Joe: Yeah, but before we left for this tour, Ben Weasel flew out to Maine where we rehearse and we recorded a five song EP for Lookout. I think we're going back to them because the thing with Hopeless just didn't work out financially. At the time [two years ago], even Lookout thought it was a good idea. They were like, "Take a break from us and we'll take a break from you." I think what we found out is that we're all good friends: Lookout, B-Face, and everybody. We got past it. A lot of it is my fault because I had to be bullheaded and say "fuck it." I think we're going to do our next album for Lookout if they want it. We do really well there, and we're known as a Lookout band. For now, we have the EP that Weasel produced for us, which is coming out in November. It turned out really good.

GS: How influential was Wimpy on the songwriting for *Beyond the Valley of the Assfuckers* [the Queers' most recent LP]?

Joe: On some songs he played a big part. The whole session was kind of a mess, and Dave recorded the bass parts out west.

GS: You sent the tapes to him?

Joe: Yeah, we sent it to [unintelligible name of a recording studio] and Dave went in to record it. I tried to do the bass parts, but it didn't turn out well. When Wimpy came into the studio, it was just me, Lurch, and Tierney, our producer. Wimpy saved

**"when you go on the Warped Tour. You lose all
"street cred" with me."**



the day and put everybody in a good mood. Hugh had died last year and then my dad died. It was my fault the sessions weren't so hot, but when Wimpy came in he really pulled it together. He does backing vocals on a lot of songs and helped with the songwriting. When he was there, I felt like the pressure was off of me. I don't know if people say it's the best Queers stuff or not, but everything really flowed when he came in.

GS: Not to sound like I'm kissing ass, but I really like the new stuff. *Beyond The Valley* is tied with *Suck This* for my favorite Queers record.

Joe: Yeah, my favorites are *Grow Up* and *Don't Back Down*. We've had different phases. We had early stuff like *Love Songs* and *Grow Up. A Day Late And A Dollar Short* was the earlier stuff with Wimpy. Then we did *Don't Back Down*, which was a really successful album for us, and I loved that one. It kind of all blends together when we play live.

GS: Do you have any plans for another live album?

Joe: We're doing another live one, definitely, and it should be soon.

GS: How long do you think you'll continue with the Queers?

Joe: I don't know. I told Dave there's still a lot I want to do, including another live album, and I also want to do the next album with Ben Weasel producing. I also want to do a real pop, Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*-type album; real pop stuff with pianos. I might have to do it as my solo album. I haven't thought about it too much, but there's still stuff I want to do musically. When it gets to be a paycheck, then fuck it, I'm out of here. I want to start writing books and stuff. I'm going to do one about the Queers. I always take notes on tour, like with Henry Rollins' *Get In The Van*. I want to call mine *Get Out Of The Van* because I've kicked so many people out [laughing]. We'll be around at least a few more years, but the band still sounds the way I want it to sound. I'm having fun. We've got a great bunch of people, and no one is drinking and druggin' and shit.

GS: That must make things a little smoother.

Joe: Oh yeah, it's a lot easier than fuckin'

flying home from Amsterdam because you're strung out on heroin. That's where the booze led me. I'd be in Japan or Europe thinking, "This is all I ever wanted to do with my life," and I still wasn't happy. It was like, "Geez, maybe I should stop drinking and smoking crack." But it's boring to talk about all that shit. I don't miss any of that. In fact, I felt like we had this image: y'know, we're the Queers, "I Only Drink Bud" and all that shit. You get caught up in the hype. You feel like a clown when you think, "I gotta drink with this guy and that guy," and then do drugs like the Sid Vicious thing. I was like, "Who am I? A fuckin' clown jumping through a hoop? Or Joe Queer?" Some kids are like [sarcastically], "Oh, so now you don't drink?" and I tell 'em, "No, I'm an alcoholic and I can't handle it like you can." So fuck it.

GS: Are you still going out to sea every winter on the fishing boat?

Joe: Yeah, when we got back from Europe I went out for two and a half months on my brother's boat. When we finish this tour, I'll do one trip. Then we have another tour in October, and after that I'll do it off and on for the winter. I like to do it to get away from music and the false sense of reality. Even at our small level, people put you on a pedestal. I see kids get all excited. They're like, "It's Joe Queer!" Then I work on the boat and my brother's like, "Go down and fuckin' move the ice over there because we need this end to put the fish in." It's 5:00 in the morning, the boat's rockin' and heaving, and I know I'm not a rock star. It works for me. It's the work more than the paycheck. I mean, I like making money too and it's tough work. Not many of these "Working Class Oi-Boys" would go out and do it. They're all supported by their moms and girlfriends. Working class? I'm fucking working class. I don't mind it. I could live off the band. I don't have to work, but when the band gets together again it's that much better. I called Gino, our roadie, who's a big part of the whole operation. I said, "Gino, we're going back on the road and everyone's excited!" We've got new jokes and it's fun hanging out.

GS: I've got a question about the Warped Tour that I forgot to ask earlier. I read one of your previous interviews in which you mentioned your idea for an "Anti-Warped Tour." You wanted to have bands like Green Day...before they did the

Warped Tour [laughing]...

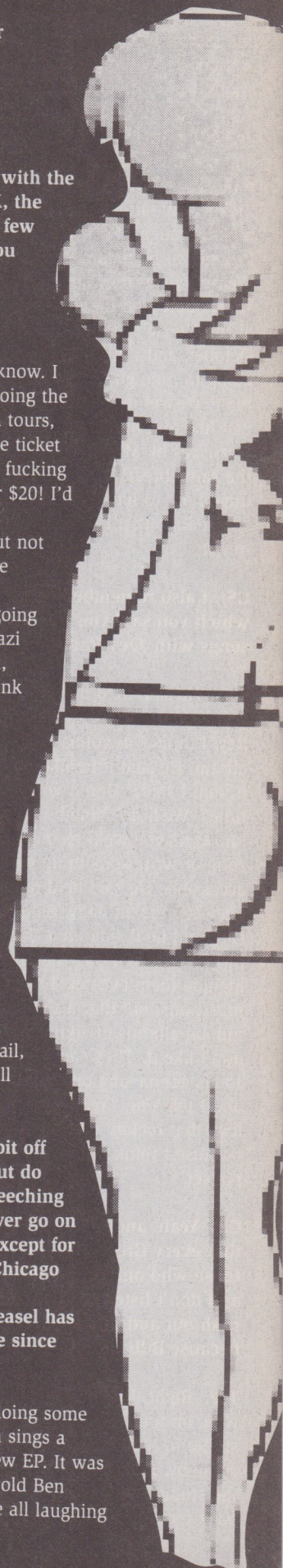
Joe: Yeah [laughing]!

GS: ...along with the Queers, MTX, the Muffs, and a few others. Do you think it will ever happen?

Joe: I don't know. I see Epitaph doing the Punk-O-Rama tours, but even those ticket prices are too fucking much...\$15 or \$20! I'd still like to do something, but not necessarily the "Anti-Warped Tour." I was going to talk to Fugazi about doing it, but I don't think they would. Green Day, yeah [laughing], they went on the Warped Tour, but I don't know. It's more the idea than the bands themselves. I love Anti-Flag, Green Day, Avail, the Donnass...all those bands.

GS: This is a bit off the subject, but do you think Screeching Weasel will ever go on tour again? [Except for a few recent Chicago performances, Screeching Weasel has not played live since 1993.]

Joe: They're doing some shows and Ben sings a song on our new EP. It was like seeing the old Ben again. We were all laughing



and shit. It was a fucking ball just goofing around. People forget that punk rock is not a job. It is so much fucking fun, and when you think you're doing everybody a favor by getting up there and pouting on stage and playing your fuckin' bullshit fucking tunes in your wife beaters with your fuckin' gay tattoos, acting like you're fucking tough...Fuck you! That ain't punk. It ought to be fuckin' fun, and Screeching Weasel, yeah, they've talked about doing shows here and there. They've got a show at the House of Blues in Chicago in October, and I'm fucking going out! I'm going to tune guitars or whatever, man! Weasel was a big influence on me, just like the Muffs and *Our Bodies Ourselves* by MTX. Just to be mentioned in the same breath as those fuckin' bands is unreal. Or to have Joey Ramone come up and tell me that I write good songs, it's unreal.

GS: I also remember an interview in which you said you might record a few songs with Joey Ramone.

Joe: He said he'd do it. I'd have to fly out and go to the studio with him and Daniel Rey. I think I'm gonna do it on this next album. He said if he liked the tune he'd do it, and I said, "Don't worry, we've got the tunes. We'll do something cool." I don't know, maybe we'll record an old Queers song or write something with Ben. He's accessible. He said he'd do it. I've just been too fuckin' lazy. Billie Joe from Green Day said he'd sing on a Queers album too, but I never sent him the tape. I'd like to include them because I respect them as musicians, not that it's gonna help sell a million albums or something. Some kids don't like it. They say, "Oooh, I heard Billie Joe is gonna sing on your fuckin' album," and I tell 'em, "Yeah, I respect Green Day. I love that fuckin' band!" I'm not doing it because I think it'll put more money in my pocket.

GS: Yeah, and it's ridiculous to assume that every Green Day fan, especially those who only know them from MTV and don't listen to other punk bands, will rush out and buy a Queers album just because Billie Joe sings on one song.

Joe: Right. It would just be fun. They were on tour last time we were in the studio in Maine, so they were too busy to come by. I want do it where Billie comes to the studio, we spend five minutes in the back room writing a song, and we record it

right away. That's how we did it with Ben. We only had one weekend. Well, really only a Saturday, but we ended up doing some overdubs on Sunday. We had a song half done called "I've Had It With You," which is about a minute long. We sat down and wrote the words and I said, "Ben, why don't you sing it?" That project came out good because you can tell we we're having fun.

GS: What's it called? And will it be a 7 inch?

Joe: It's called "The Queers Today." I don't think it'll fit on a 7 inch, so it will probably be a CD-EP. We did "Salt Lake City" by the Beach Boys, and I know I've beaten the Beach Boys/Queers thing into the ground, but I really wanted to do it. We didn't even think about it. The best albums we do, we just don't think about it.

GS: Another thing you mentioned two years ago was that you and Ben Weasel might do an album of punk cover songs.

Joe: Yeah, that never came together. Me and Weasel talked about it. One of these days we'll do it, but I'm busy and he's busy too. I'm going to do a solo album for Kung Fu Records whenever I get off my ass. It's not gonna be punk tunes. It'll be more like '50s and '60s stuff: the Troggs, Ricky Nelson, Leslie Gore, Nico, the Velvet Underground...maybe T Rex and some obscure stuff from the '60s you've never heard of.

GS: How is this tour going so far? You've been on the road for about a month now?

Joe: No, more like two and a half weeks. It's going great. The Queers are lucky that our audience is still around. The kids are into it and pretty much every show has been packed. We had a couple weird nights, like last night in Seattle, but it was a Monday night. We played a different place because RCKNDY [a former Seattle all-ages club] got torn down, but there were still 350 kids there going nuts. It was actually the most fun show we've played on this tour. If we played there on a weekend, we'd probably see 500 or 600.

GS: Which songs have you filmed videos for, and where can people see them?

Joe: Mainly on compilations. I think Lookout has a video comp of all their bands. We did "Don't Back Down" and

"Punk Rock Girls" for them. Then we did a video for a song off *Punk Rock Confidential* called "Tamara's A Punk", and that's on a Hopeless comp. I think it's called *Cinema Beer Nuts*.

GS: Somebody told me your videos have been played on M2, which is a cable channel related to MTV?

Joe: Yeah, M2 and MTV did a simulcast one time, and I saw "Punk Rock Girls" on a Wednesday afternoon. I didn't even know it was gonna happen. I don't watch MTV, but someone had it on and I was like, "Holy shit!" It didn't equate into any album sales, though. That's a whole different level of reality, I guess, but who wants it? It's like playing Powerball when it's up to \$62 million. Part of me thinks, "Yeah I'd love to fuckin' win!," but part of me is like, "Aw, I don't wanna fuckin' win. I don't want \$62 million fuckin' bucks!" It's scary because it changes your whole fuckin' life.

GS: Now, I know we've talked about this a lot already, but I'd like to get a little more specific. What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in punk rock over the past 20 years? Or even in the last decade since you started touring?

Joe: Well, we never toured until we got on Lookout ten years ago. But as far as the punk scene goes, I remember when we'd go see the Dead Kennedys or Circle Jerks at The Olympic, or Black Flag and the Germs, and the audience was the show. You really felt like you were part of something. It was great and hard to describe. It was just so anti-rock star back then. Now I see these lead singers in wife-beaters from these hokey California bands. It makes me wanna puke! These guys are like a parody of a parody; a parody of a lead singer. And these are supposed to be punk bands doing this shit! In the old days, like at The Rat in Boston, if the audience really didn't like a band, lots of times they'd get beaten up carrying their equipment out back. That was punk. That was a review! You didn't need to read about yourself in the paper. You knew if you sucked and had no business being on stage. But punk is the popular thing now, or alleged "punk." I use the term loosely now. That's the biggest change I've seen. Bands like Green Day, the Offspring and Nirvana changed the whole playing field. A lot of bands now get into punk rock for a career move. It's like a career move to these fuckers! They're up

there with all their tattoos and wife-beaters. Before, it was like you were the outsider, you fuckin' got beat up in school, and you went to the punk show because it was the only place you fit in. Everybody was embraced; the geeks and everyone else. Now it's the fuckin' Warped Tour and outrageous ticket prices, bonehead attitudes, and how many T-shirts your band can sell. I see these bands on the way up and then I see 'em again on the way down. A lot of 'em have opened up for us, like Goldfinger and fuckin' MXPX. I can't help it. I hate it. MXPX opened for us a few years ago in Seattle.

GS: I think I heard about that [laughing].

Joe: They had a hit that was being played on the radio. We always did well at RCKNDY on our own, but Margie, our booking agent, called up and said, "Ticket sales are fuckin' slow. We need another band." It was all bullshit politics that I was too stupid to pay attention to. We were already touring with the Groovie Ghoulies and Screw 32; so I thought, "Let this fuckin' band play first. MXPX? I don't know who they are." Anyway, the Ghoulies go on first, then Screw 32, then MXPX. Margie flies in for the show. I'm standing with her next to the stage watching these guys get up there, and they're on this Christian label. I hate it! I fuckin' hate that shit. Christian label? What's that supposed to mean? They can't say bad words? The kids in the audience had all these little Bibles and shit, and they just pummeled those motherfuckers. MXPX made it through about two songs before they got booed off the stage. I thought it was fuckin' great! Then this guy told me a story about MXPX going down to Salt Lake City. They wanted to hire a film crew and shoot the fuckin' show like it was something important. They stiffed the fuckin' promoters for \$43,000 for the crew. That ain't punk! They're not punk, they never were, and they never will be. Fuck Blink 182...er, I mean MXPX! I don't know about Blink 182. I think they're just Green Day wanna-be's. I always thought Green Day was a great fuckin' band. Some people hate 'em, but I don't give a fuck. Green Day's got the fucking goods. They've got great songs and they just happened to get popular. I don't know if Blink 182 would be playing that type of music if ska was still big. Like when ska got big with Less Than Jake and Reel Big Fish, all of a sudden everyone was into ska. It was

sincere in its insincerity, you know what I mean? The fact is that everyone jumped on the ska bandwagon and then jumped off when it died down. Goldfinger opened for us once and they were all making fun of our crowd, saying things like, "How old are these kids?" Then I turned on the TV a couple of years later and they were doing the fuckin' teenybopper ska-punk shit. I thought, "Fuck them!" They opened up for the Queers because we drew a crowd, and at the time we were like a stepping stone to bigger and better things. I hear all these stories about bands like Bad Religion, and how they're assholes to all the bands who open for 'em.

GS: Really, Bad Religion?

Joe: Oh my God, yeah.

GS: That's interesting. They just went on tour opening for Blink 182.

Joe: They'll suck any dick that dangles in front of 'em. They can't suck it fast enough! NOFX opened for Blink 182, too. Fuck that! Have they no shame? The Muffs were thinking about opening for No Doubt and I said, "Kim, you are God. You write great songs. Fuck No Doubt. You're not gonna win over their audience anyway." We could go out, do the Warped Tour, and open for these bands like Social Distortion and be more visible, but fuck it. We'll do our own shows. We just happened to be in town at the same time as Strung Out for those four midwest gigs, and we didn't want to play against each other. They're good guys. I'm not into their music that much and I doubt they like mine, but we got along and it was cool.

GS: Shit, I'm almost out of tape. Joe, I want to thank you for taking the time for this interview. Do you have any closing comments; anything that you feel must be said about the Queers?

Joe: Yeah, I think *Punk Rock Confidential* is just as good an album as *Grow Up*. Remember, we had pop tunes on both. I'm saying this mainly for Jeff Bale's benefit!

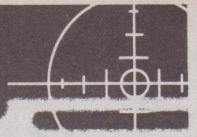
THE QUEERS, PO Box 1201, North Hampton, NH 03862 www.thequeers.com

SELECTED QUEERS DISCOGRAPHY:

"Love Me" 7" (1982, Doheny)
"Kicked Out of the Webelos" 7" (1984,

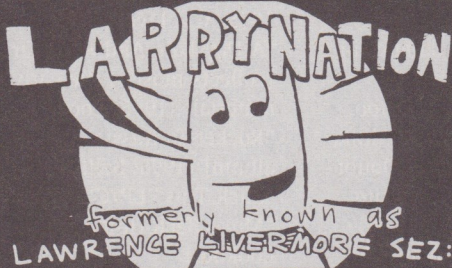
Doheny)
"Grow Up" (1990, Shakin' Street /reissued by Lookout in 1993)
"A Proud Tradition" double 7" [the Queers' first two EPs] (1992, Doheny & 1993, Selfless)
"Too Dumb To Quit" 7" (1993, Doheny & 1994, Selfless)
"The Queers Live in Chicago" 7" (1993, V.M.L.)
"Love Songs For The Retarded" LP/CD (1993, Lookout)
"Beat Off" LP/CD (1994, Lookout)
split 7" with Sinkhole (live) (1994, Ringing Ear)
"Shout At The Queers" LP (live) (1994, Selfless)
"Love Me/Lonie Louie" 7" (included with first 100 copies of "Shout At The Queers") (1994, Selfless)
split 7" with Pink Lincolns (1995, Just Add Water)
-Fireside Bowl in Chicago 7" (live) 1995, V.M.Live
"A Day Late And A Dollar Short" CD [collects most of the early Queers' material] (1995, Lookout)
"Rocket To Russia" LP [Ramones cover album] (1995, Selfless)
"Suck This" LP/CD (live) (1995, Clearview)
"Move Back Home" LP/CD (1995, Lookout)
"Surf Goddess" 7"/CD-EP (1995, Lookout)
"My Old Man's A Fatso" 7" (1995, Woundup)
"Look Ma, No Flannel" 7" (1995, Clearview)
"Don't Back Down" LP/CD (1996, Lookout)
"Bubblemum Dreams" 7" (1996, Lookout)
"Everything's OK" 7"/CD-EP (1998, Hopeless)
"Right On Target" split CD with 88 Fingers Louie (1998, Hopeless)
"Punk Rock Confidential" LP/CD (1998, Hopeless)
"Later Days and Better Lays" CD [demos & outtakes] (1999, Lookout)
"Beyond The Valley of the Assfuckers" LP/CD (2000, Hopeless)

If anyone is interested in reading a 1998 interview with Joe Queer (in which he discusses his conflicts with MRR among other things), please e-mail Glenn at gshires@hotmail.com for a copy. ☺



Jose Palafox, *Maximum Rockroll's* genius-in-residence, recently managed to rise to a new level of unintentional comedy by getting himself arrested for making a bomb threat. As you might expect, he says he's completely innocent and, what's more, a victim of "racial profiling" targeted at "activists of color." How does he know this? Why, the student who allegedly overheard him making the bomb threat and shopped him to the cops was a "white male."

If only I'd thought of that one back in my teenage delinquent days. I went through a spell once where every time I got arrested or questioned, the officer who nailed me was the town's first and only black cop. At the time I assumed it was coincidence, or that he was a particularly talented cop, and the fact that he was eventually made chief of police argues for the latter interpretation. But now, thanks to Palafox, I realize that I too was a victim of racial profiling: a delinquent of whiteness being mercilessly harassed by a black male cop.



Of course I was usually guilty as sin, whereas we have no way of knowing about Palafox. The charge was dropped for lack of evidence, it being a case of Palafox's word against that of the student who had him busted. Maybe it's just my suspicious nature, but I can't help thinking he probably did something to justify being arrested. The bomb threat might have been his idea of a joke, though when I think back to Palafox's *MRR* column (#209) where he talks very seriously about buying a gun to arm himself for "the revolution," I have to wonder.

In any event, even joking about putting bombs in public buildings is serious business. Signs are posted in airports telling you that you can be arrested for talking about carrying a bomb onto a plane, even if you insist that you're just kidding around, and that's probably as it should be. But what if wasn't a joke? Suppose his real intent was to create a bomb scare and thus disrupt the event that was going on inside? Sounds a bit extreme, doesn't it, but Palafox was one of a couple hundred students and "activists" there to protest against the right

of free speech, at least insofar as it concerned free speech of the man who was at that moment addressing a campus organization.

That man was David Horowitz, a onetime leftist and supporter of the Black Panther Party who is now a well-known conservative writer and publisher. Berkeley's "activists of color" were hopping mad because of an ad he'd placed in the *Daily Californian* arguing against their proposal for paying reparations to the descendants of African-American slaves. So not only had he committed the cardinal sin of disagreeing with them; he was compounding the offense by daring to come on campus and say it to their faces.

If you're not familiar with Horowitz, much of what he says is just garden-variety Republicanism. Nothing too extreme, but nothing I'd take too seriously, either. He probably helped get Bush elected, but then so did half you guys, the half that voted for Nader, anyway. But he's written very intelligently on the subject of race and affirmative action, in particular attacking the new radical orthodoxy which sees casual abuse and denigration of white people and white culture as a "progressive" antidote for the abuse and exploitation of black people that has gone on in the past.

You could agree, you could disagree; it's certainly a viewpoint worth discussing. But Palafox and his friends were not there to discuss things, they were there to stop discussion. Why? Because Horowitz is a "racist," of course. Never mind that several members of his extended family are black, that he's spent much of his life living and working closely with black people, he's a racist. From the reaction of the crowd, you'd think he was advocating a return to segregation or slavery. But no, he's just suggesting that affirmative action and reparations are well-intentioned ideas that have not worked and will not work, that they hurt black people rather than help them.

It's not that extreme an idea. Millions of people feel the same way, many of them African-American. 54% of California voters agreed with him when they voted to abolish affirmative action. Even if you completely disagree with him, it's hardly an opinion

that's beyond the pale. Except on the Berkeley campus, that is. This is the new kind of academic discourse: you can say anything you want as long as you agree with me. And if you try to say anything else, a mob will come shout you down, blockade the building, and threaten you with violence. Isn't college life grand? Aren't you glad you opted for a life of the mind?

Anyone who's been reading me for long will know that graduating

from Berkeley is something I'm almost unreasonably proud of. I loved the years I spent there, and I love the education I got. I'm proud, too, of the Berkeley tradition of activism and protest. It was the home of the Free Speech Movement, which played a seminal role in the student movement that would sweep across America and the world in the 1960s. How bitterly ironic, then, that a new generation of student radicals thinks it's honoring the Berkeley

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tradition not by fostering free speech, but by trying to prevent it. Berkeley radicalism has always had a prescriptive element that argued, "Do what we say if you want to save the world." In recent years, it's gravitated more toward the proscriptive, concentrating on the many varieties of action, speech, and even thought that are too dangerous to be allowed.

Nowhere is this more visible than in the arena of racial and gender politics. People with the wrong pigmentation or plumbing are told not just that their opinions are wrong, but that they have no right even to have opinions. If they question that assertion, they are told that they have failed to come to terms with the position of power and privilege conferred upon them by their race or gender, and that until they do, they are guilty of oppressive behavior.

Here's some of what's been going on lately at my alma mater. Controversial speakers have been shouted down or prevented from speaking at all. Whole press runs of the campus newspaper have been stolen and destroyed by self-appointed censors. There have been two small-scale race riots in which shops were looted and innocent passersby were assaulted and beaten because of the color of their skin.

The most recent riot was especially instructive, because it grew out of a political rally promoted by a group known as The Coalition To Defend Affirmative Action By Any Means Necessary, BAMN for short. They're the same bunch who've been responsible for several editions of the *Daily Californian* going missing. BAMN is not a very popular group, even among other campus leftists, because of their divisive and aggressive tactics. Unable to attract sufficient numbers of Cal students, they put out a call for high school students from around the Bay Area, and some teachers and school boards actually let kids out of school for the event.

Result: in addition to the usual marching and speeches, a small mob of black teenagers looted a shoe store and randomly attacked white and Asian students unlucky enough to be passing by. You'd think the organizers of the rally would be horrified by what clearly looked like racist violence. If nothing else, it cast their protest in a very bad light.

But no. Here's what one of them had to say, "The youths that came out today are fighting for their futures. It was overall a very positive day." He went on to liken the young rioters to the civil rights protesters of Martin Luther King's era.

As someone who considers Martin Luther King to be one of the greatest Americans of the 20th century, as someone who once had the honor of marching with him and hearing him speak, I find this more than slightly obscene. King, like Gandhi, led a movement whose power arose from a deep sense of moral purpose. The quiet, determined discipline of his followers, even in the face of jail and beatings, won admiration and support even from some who had been staunch segregationists. To somehow conflate that movement, one of the more shining moments in American history, with a gang of thugs looting stores and beating people, beggars belief. But it's sadly representative of what passes for progressive thought in at least some quarters at Berkeley.

As much as I love my university for the education it offered me, I love the idea of universities even more. The university, in its pure sense, is one of civilization's crowning achievements. Think about it: a place whose primary reason for existing is to accumulate knowledge and search for truth. I know that in the modern age many universities fail to rise above the level of job training and day care centers for the surplus children of the middle class. But just because something doesn't always work the way it's meant to doesn't invalidate the idea of the thing itself.

One probably romanticized view traces the origins of the university back to the teachers and philosophers who gathered in the

LARRY LIVERMORE

Agora, the marketplace of ancient Athens, discussing and disputing with any students or passersby they could attract. The principle of Socratic dialogue that emerged from the Agora has underpinned higher education ever since.

But in order for there to be dialogue, there must be more than one voice, more than one view. The demonstrators who prevent dissenting opinions from being heard may claim that theirs is a higher cause, that their beliefs are so indisputably the correct ones that to allow them to be questioned will only do harm. In other words, the age-old search for truth through dialogue and dialectic can be abandoned because they already know the truth. This has been the position of fundamentalists and totalitarians throughout history, and it is a position which, thankfully, has been defeated time and time again. Why, then is it rearing its ugly head again in, of all places, an institution specifically devoted to ideas and learning?

Part of it, I think, is an assault on the concept of merit itself. What began as an admirable crusade to make higher education available to all *qualified* students, regardless of their race or gender, has degenerated into demands that higher education be made available to *all* students, qualified or not, because of their race or gender. Affirmative action advocates may argue that they're redressing past injustices, giving preferential treatment to minorities to make up for what they consider to have been preferential treatment formerly given to whites. But what they're failing to consider is that even when education was a largely white male affair, top universities like Harvard or Oxford or Berkeley did not admit students simply based on their being white.

Then as now, the elite universities accepted only a small percentage of those who applied. That's what made them elite. Today, however, the word "elite" has gone out of fashion. The notion that some universities might be better than others, that some students might be smarter than others, is viewed as retrograde, and, all too often, racist.

Why this should be the case is a bit of a mystery. Few people have trouble accepting that not everyone is qualified to play for the New York Yankees or the LA Lakers. Most of us have had to accept at some point that no matter how diligently we practice, we're just not going to make it to the big leagues. Similarly, it's well understood that certain sports tend to be dominated by certain races: one of the few things rarer than a Caucasian NBA star is an African-American hockey player. Yet nobody suggests the NBA or NHL are racist institutions. It's well understood that professional sports teams will only succeed if they obtain the best possible players, and it would be a very foolish manager who would refuse to employ a potential star because of his race. Only the most talented individuals ever make it to the major leagues, and that's why fans are willing to shell out small fortunes to watch them perform.

That's elitism in its purest form. And if you care about sports at all, you're in favor of it. No matter how much you also love diversity and multiculturalism, you'd be screaming bloody murder if the government told your favorite basketball team it had to replace some of its best black players with white and Chinese guys. Or women, as long we're being truly fair. So if elitism and selection by merit are taken for granted in the sports world, why are they considered instruments of oppression when it comes to education? As a sports fan myself, I know how miserable it can feel to see my team lose because of a bad break or sloppy play, but ultimately no real harm is done. It's just, as non-fans never tire of reminding you, a game.

But when universities fail, real harm is done. And this harm is

HIT SQUAD

compounded when it's the elite universities that fail, because it is those institutions which set the intellectual standards and initiate the discourse which will subsequently spread throughout society. Who in their right mind would want such powerful institutions to be composed of anything but the brightest and most talented individuals?

There's quite a coalition, actually. But I maintain that the true villains of the piece are not the obvious ones: the ill-informed ideologues who will use "any means necessary," including blatant thuggery, to turn universities into social laboratories for their crackpot theories (and yes, before you protest, I realize that state and corporate interests have also been guilty of such behavior). Even more guilty, I believe, are the academic nihilists, the disciples of Derrida and Foucault, who suggest that there is no truth, that language and philosophy are meaningless constructs whose only significance is to be found in the way they are used to gain or wield power.

Once vibrant university departments are increasingly populated by these drones, who instead of grappling with vital issues of the day, while their time away spinning impenetrable skeins of jargonistic claptrap. They sap the life from classical disciplines like rhetoric and literature and debase the very principle of learning itself. The harm done is twofold. Not only do they lead impressionable students on a never-ending journey up their own asses, but they leave a great yawning vacuum at the heart of academia, one which is too easily filled by anti-intellectualism

and racism masquerading as "radicalism."

In addition to being a phenomenal waste of time and resources, postmodern critical theory plays right into the hands of ersatz radicals. It functions as a linguistic security blanket, allowing them to justify any kind of behavior (for a prime example, read the Foucault idealizers' rationalizations of why it was alright for their hero to knowingly infect hundreds of men with AIDS in anonymous sexual encounters), and it functions as a bludgeon with which any and all dissenting views can be dispatched as irrelevant.

The tide is beginning to turn against the postmodernists - see Bricmont and Sokal's *Impostures Intellectuelles* for a devastating and sometimes hilarious critique - but the malady lingers on, and will for decades to come. It's difficult to get through an undergraduate course these days without having one's brain turned to mush by tedious forays into the tendentious thickets of deconstruction and post-structuralism. Things will change only when students - because many professors and especially TAs are already too far gone - start demanding more of their university - and of themselves. It's easy and tempting to go along with the program, whether by dutifully studying and regurgitating the obscurantist gobbledygook dished out in class ("Well, she's the professor; she must know what she's talking about.") or by tolerating the politics of racism and intimidation ("Sure, they may go a little overboard, but it's a good cause, isn't it?").

But going along with the program was never, and never should be, what a great university is about. If we cede control of the university to nihilists and totalitarians, we lose more than the university; we lose one of the cornerstones of civilization, and, ultimately, civilization itself. +



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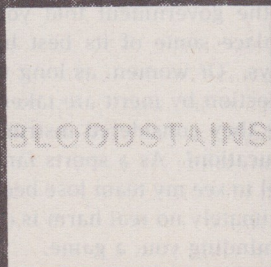
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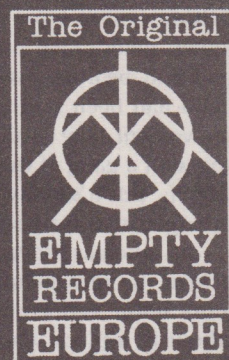
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IMPORTANT NOTE: Apart from this initial disclaimer, there will be no mention of the Pirates v. Vikings conundrum for the remainder of this column. Those seeking passionate discourse on same are advised to skip over to Leslie Goldman's column, where the Pirates v. Vikings thing is debated with alarming frequency. That said, let the record show that as of 2:54, I HAVE RESUMED CONSUMING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AFTER A DAMN NEAR TEN YEAR LONG LAYOFF! HOWEVER, THIS HAS NOT DETERRED ME ONE IOTA FROM MY RECENTLY ADOPTED BELIEF THAT IF I END EVERY NON-QUESTION SENTENCE WITH EXACTLY ONE EXCLAMATION POINT, MY COLUMNS WILL BE WRITTEN IN RECORD (and, occasionally, in negative) TIME! It's true! I am not yet so enmired in the Miasma Of The Grape that i have begun to slur my exclamation points, so take that, Baron Von Redberry! However, a quick heads-up on what this shocking resumption of consumption means to you, Al Franken: 1) If you don't like the way i drive, stay the fuck off the Sidewalk Sidewalk Yeah Yeah Yeah; and 2) i think this column is gonna be an issue late no matter how many exclamation points i use! I couldn't help it! The siren song of the almighty PUCKER™ has been assailing my every remaining brain cell — hell, assailing my every remaining wassail (like the one caroler said to the other caroler on the Budweiser commercial, "WASSAAAAAAIIIIIIILLLLL!!") — controlling me from without and forcing me to miss deadlines and eat stale bar popcorn and make out with strange women and shit! Who might say me nay? I'm Puckered! I'm tuckered! Like the Diodes said, "i'm tuckered of waking up Puckered!" PUCKER™! Liquid Jolly Rancher™ flavored Schnapps in a bottle! PUCKER™! The cause and the cure of all non-female-related misery! PUCKER™! Surely the opiate of the New Millennium! I hereby change my name to "The Pucker™ Rebel!"

No, to "The Pucker™ Mother Fucker!" I'm a street walkin' cheetah with a hide full o' Pucker™! I'm the runaway son of the Fastbacks album "Zucker!" I am the world's forgotten fucker! The one who searches to drink Pucker™! Surely, all and sundry must be in complete agreement with me when i state for the record that, as of 2:54, PUCKER™ IS THE GREATEST ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE OF ALL TIME! I mean, beer is okay, but, after ten long years of draught (as in

"no rainfall," not as in "draft" as in "beer") preceding by a roughly equal period of virtual Beer Worship, the best-tasting beer i have yet to scrounge up since my return to The Grid has been Bud Light™! I mean, it's been ten years of agonizing deprivation, i am, not to put too fine a point on it, but READY TO DRINK SOME FUCKIN' BEER, JACK, and Bud Light™ is the best product the Universal Beer Man™ can offer me! Bud Light™ is the best i can do! Bud Light™ is as high as the Rockometer of Beer goes these days! Miller High Life Light™ takes the silver! Milwaukee's Best™ takes

the bronze! Schlitz™ gets an honorable mention! Well, what the fuck??? I COME DASHING HEADLONG BACK INTO THE FOAMY EMBRACE OF GRAIN ALCOHOL AFTER A TORTUROUS TEN-YEAR SEPARATION, AND THE BEST BEER I CAN FIND IS...BUD LIGHT??? Whose bright idea was it to erect all these microbreweries in my absence, churning out bottle after bottle of undrinkable wheat-piss??? Of hop-laden micro-urine??? Of bacteria-permeated outhouse squeezings??? THESE PEOPLE HAVE HAD TEN YEARS TO WHIP UP SOME MANNER OF DAZZLINGLY TASTY NORBSTERBRAU FOR WHICH TO WELCOME ME BACK INTO THE FOLD WITH, AND THEY HAVE, APPARENTLY, EXHAUSTED ALL THEIR ENERGY AND RESOURCES INVENTING NON-POTABLE SWILL LIKE CHERRY-WHOLE-WHEAT-BAGEL-LAGER, AND HONEY-MUSHROOM-SHRIMP-RAMEN-ALE, AND GOAT-CHEESE-FLY-IN-AMBER-STOUT, AND GOD KNOWS WHAT ELSE!!! These cretinous pagans hardly deserve my business, but, as always, the Beer Thing



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R.V. NORB
A GROWN MAN WHO RESEMBLES A GORGON VAGNAB
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I'm a street walkin' cheetah with a hide full of Pucker™! I'm the runaway son of the Fastbacks album "Zucker!" I am the world's forgotten fucker! The one who searches to drink Pucker™!

the candy-coated clown they call the Sandman! [speaking of the Sandman {the Marvel™ Comics villain, not any of the numerous DC superheroes of that name}, today's all-important schism-inducing brain-tangler for the at-home audience is this: *In any manner of pitched battle, who would win, the Frightful Four or the Fatal Five?* {i would, simply for laughs, add the Sinister Six to the mix, but, since the Sandman was in both the Frightful Four

and the Sinister Six at one time or another, the question would tend to involve far too much trivial and esoteric speculation if I were to increase the variables in such a manner} {for the record, my pick is the Fatal Five by quadruple-decapitation about two-point-eight seconds after the bell rings. *Validus, dude!*} The Mexicans™ had the right idea! Turn that goddamn shit away at the border, like a cattle car full o' cows with bovine spongiform disorder™! I mean, for god's sakes, it's *worse than Roll'ing Rock™!* Of course, it IS better than Miller Genuine Draft™, but that's sort of a given! [to me, the

HIT SQUAD

fact that Pabst Blue Ribbon™ was the only American beer i could find when i was in China seemed to more or less hammer home the truth of the long-standing anthropological speculation that the Native Americans might, in fact, merely be Chinese who wandered across the currently defunct Asia-Alaska toll bridge in the caveman days, but i'm sure you'll thank me to keep my racial beer use profiling to myself from here on out| Pabst looks cool, it sounds cool, but it tastes troublingly similar to cold vomit, which i could manufacture on my own, if i bought into this whole "microbrewing" scam, which i don't). In point of fact, the only advances the institution known as BEER has eked out in the last decade seem to be in the container division, so i find that the only time i get legitimately giddy with the palpitating anticipatory thrill of beer-drinking-to-come is when i go to liquor stores and see all the new cool beer formats that i have yet to try: 16 oz. plastic bottles of Miller Lite™! Dude! 40 oz. Busch Light™ widemouths! Dude! 22 oz. clear glass bottles of Miller High Life™! Dude! But it's got Miller High Life™ in it! "Dude!" anyway! I mean, i'm glad to see that a few brave souls were still burning the midnight oil (actually, someone should have burnt them during their heyday in the mid-80's, when this joke would have been funnier) inventing bold and grand new Beer Stuff like the 16 oz. Plastic Beer Bottle while the forces of evil were inventing this transcontinental plague known as microbrewing, but i'm still a little put out that Beer In General has not kept pace with The Container Division as far as reflecting the increased sophistication of the Beer Drinking Public of which i am a recently reclaimed member! In short: FUCK YOU, BEER! You have caused an entire nation to not live up to its potential, and now you staunchly refuse to live up to yours! I mean, they got cherry beer, they got wheat beer, they got cherry wheat beer, they got cranberry beer, they got honey beer — BUT WHERE OH WHERE IS THE CHOCOLATE CHIP BEER??? I mean, who wants beer that tastes like cherries? Who wants beer that's opaque and orange with some manner of bumblebee ejaculation? Did Koogler™ ever sell? NO! And yet, the obviously brilliant concept of a bottle of ice cold beer with two scoops of chocolate chips fermenting happily inside has completely escaped these nimrods! For shame! A pox on thee, Beer! I mean, i'll drink you, but we're not going out any more (here's an interesting point: Since my elegant swan-dive off the wagon, the frequency with which i make out

with Women With Whom I Have Never Made Out Before has spiked drastically! I attribute this to two factors: 1) My drunkenness, because everybody loves an asshole; and 2) My new pick-up line, which is, predictably, "so, do you wanna make out?" As any male over the age of 20 knows all too well, the line "so, do you wanna fuck?" is, despite its seamless logic, absolutely useless as regards procuring fornicational partners [almost every American male eventually comes to grips with the insanity of this tragic circumstance and is eventually is able to reluctantly accept the fact that we live in a flawed society in this respect — unless you're Mykel Board, in which case you are never quite able to adapt to the fact that, against all reason, "so, do you wanna fuck" never worked and never will, and spend the rest of your life howling about the outrage of it all]; however, "so, do you wanna make out?" has never failed me yet! Unfortunately, in a development as completely unexpected as the success of my new pick-up line, exactly 0% of the people i was able to make out with by dint of my new cool make-out line actually had sex with me, which either means i am the World's Worst Maker-Out-er or i need to field test the terrifying hybrid "so, do you wanna make out and THEN fuck?" to see if perhaps my original implied concepts were too oblique to

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be understood! Oh well, it's a living! Ah, but while BEER was running aground, harpooned by its own ludicrous notions of upward mobility, LIQUOR was making the crucial advancements necessary for it to succeed, thrive, and conquer in the 21st Century! I mean, back in the olden days, what did we have? Gin? Okay, sure, you could mix it with Hi-C™ Ecto Cooler™ and Diet 7-Up™ in carefully-crafted proportions in your Red Lobster™ glass and blow bubbles into it with a straw to mix it up, but what happens when you break your Red Lobster™ glass and therefore don't know how much of each fluid to add because the only way you know how to make the drink is by adding fluids to the glass until the mixture reaches certain preset points on the Red Lobster™ logo of which only you are aware? What good is it then? Hah? And vodka? Sure, every now and again you could mix it with Red Owl™ store brand strawberry soda and orange juice in large, square Tupperware™ containers and get so drunk that you crumple into a heap in Adrenalin O.D.s van and attempt to give them directions back to your house, which is literally three blocks from the show, and wind up taking them halfway to Upper Michigan before you realize that, hrm, damn, maybe you ARE going the wrong way, but a little of that goes a long way. Rum? Two words: "Cabana Boy." Brandy? Some sort of weird old people's drink that you can light on fire to keep the natives at bay if you're the first white man in Wisconsin; quite unfit for any manner of hipster whatsoever. And whiskey? Sorry, dude, whiskey sucks. Whiskey is a

fat man's drink, and the Rockin' Rev is nothing if not not fat. That is why i drink delicious, nutritious PUCKER™! The drink that Men Who Are Not Fat Yet drink until we are fat enough to drink whiskey! PUCKER™! Some kind of man-made liquid Jolly Rancher™ in a bottle! PUCKER™! God bless Dekuyper or Dekuyper or whoever the fuck it is that makes this shit! PUCKER™! It's my wife, and it's my life! (actually, some day, i'd like to marry that "Cinnamon Girl" that Neil Young wrote the song about [not that i endorse Neil Young usage on even a casual level], or, no, better yet, that girl "Cinnamon" from that "1-Potato, 2-Potato, 3-Potato 4, lemme in Cinnamon, i want more" song which i believe was recorded by an entity known only as "Derek," who was not the same "Derek" who was in "Derek and the Dominoes" [thank god], but a completely different "Derek," so, every morning, i could wake up, pour myself a bowl of Cinnamon Life™ cereal for breakfast, look at my lovely wife and sing, to the tune of the Velvet Underground's "Heroin," [obviously] "Cinnnnn-aaaa-monnnn...it's my wife...and it's my Life™!" until she can stand it no longer — i mean, the constant musico-cereal puns, and all of the evils in this town, and everybody putting everybody else down, and all the politicians making crazy sounds, and all the dead bodies piled up in mounds, and i guess that i just don't know, and i guess that i just don't know, and goes running back to either Derek or Neil in a fit of pique, amusing me greatly and assuring me of retrieving the prize at the bottom of the Cinnamon Life™ box unopposed) (now, at some point in time, i assume i must stoop to answer perceived public speculation on the cause of my mad spiral back into the acrid clutches of ethanol-stoked fallibility [because i know everybody cares so GOD damn much], so, as a minor nod to the jovial "customer service" that i am known throughout the Periphery for, let the truth now be uncov-

ered like a vestal virgin at a Strip Twister™ party! One might ask "did you return to the clammy embrace of The Sauce as a result of real or perceived cruel mistreatment at the hands of someone you love or loved?" Nay, sirrah, i did not, though there might have been certain amounts of Real Or Perceived Cruel Mistreatment At The Hands Of Someone I Love Or Loved tangentially involved! "Could this resubmergence to the frothy shackles of the Barley Pop Polka be due to some inexplicable [or, perhaps, merely plicable] desire to thrust yourself boldly into social situations which, minus the great cauterizer of Alcohol, would otherwise have been intolerable for you to cope with, and thusly, by enduring, nay, even flourishing in said previously intolerable scenarii, greatly increasing your chances of making out with Women With Whom You Have Never Made Out With Before?" I say thee nay once again! The projected effulgence

of Trim, if it comes around, is merely a fringe benefit! The real reason that i took up the weighty cudgel of Drink, after nigh on ten years as a teetotaler, is because MY FUCKING OLYMPIA™ CLOCK BROKE! That's right! My treasured and beloved Olympia™ Beer clock, resplendent in its brown plastic faux beer keg-ism, acquired in a 1985 swap with a co-worker which delivered the treasured Olympia™ clock and a

freaky Stroh's Light™ moving sign into my clutches in exchange for one (1) can of Chef Boy-Ar-Dee™ Ravioli [dumbass forgot to pack a lunch that day! Buy low, sell high!], has given up the fucking ghost! The mighty horseshoe has inverted! The end times are near! Perhaps you do not understand! This clock has been with me with-in a few weeks of my initial moving-out of my Dad's house in 1985! It has, for the last sixteen-or-so years, been running constantly, except in cases of power failure or the occasional move — where it was, without fail, the last thing packed and the first thing unpacked and erected! This clock has been my primary household clock for ALL OF MY ADULT LIFE! An' now it's bust! Fuck, you'd drink too, if your Olympia™ clock went bust! You DO NOT UNDERSTAND: I GOTTA have that clock. I GOTTA. That clock is how i officially orient myself in the fourth dimension [and, yes, it was indeed the failing of that clock that brought me back from my woeful state in the future, if you must know! I mean, yes, i have other clocks — but, i get up for work in the morning, and my Olympia™ clock says "2:54", so i reckon i'm either gonna be seven hours early or five hours late for work, and therefore arrive at all manner of indescribably wacked-out times, simply because my belief in this clock as the One True Household Chronometer is so unwavering that, goddammit man, i still sort of believe that if my Oly clock says "2:54," it's fucking 2:54 and that's the end of it! You do not understand! No one understands! No one understands me and my clock! That's why i have to drink! Have you ever had a clock that was, at all times, your Alpha Chronometer — first among equals in the clock hierarchy of your little world — for sixteen years, and then have that clock tragically fail??? It isn't pretty! I'm legitimately bummed about the newfound incompetence of my Treasured Olympia Clock™! "It's the Water," nothing! It's the fucking CLOCK!

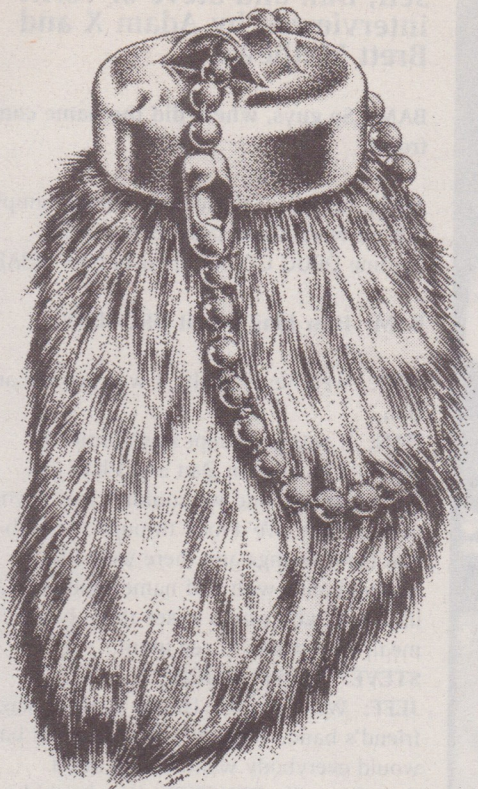
***Fuck, you'd drink too, if
your Olympia™ clock
went bust! You DO NOT
UNDERSTAND: I GOTTA
have that clock. I GOTTA.***

HIT SQUAD

The CLOCK i say!!! So unprepared for this clock's failing was i [i'm sorry, if i continue to speak like Yoda, please whop me one upside the head] that, on the fateful night i returned from wherever it was and found the clock stuck at 2:54, i, in all bald-faced truth, without even the merest hint of embellishment, *grabbed a hunting knife and began clandestinely searching my house for the person who broke in and unplugged my Olympia™ clock!* I'm not kidding; i saw the clock frozen at 2:54, saw that all the other electrically powered clocks were still keeping proper time, and immediately assumed that the clock had been unplugged by some fiend who meant to terrorize me before, i dunno, killing me or whatever! Like, you know, see the stopped clock, hear the "VEET! VEET! VEET! VEET!" thing from the shower scene in *Psycho*, whirl around in a panic and immediately catch a boning knife between the ribs from the hideously masked freak who had been hiding in the rabbit pen, awaiting my arrival! Ye gads! I had a knife in one hand, the phone in the other, i was this close from calling the cops and telling them that someone had broken into my house, stolen nothing, but unplugged my Olympia™ clock, when i noticed my Oly clock was still, in fact, plugged in, and making horrible struggling sounds as its various mechanisms strived vainly to perform their sacred duties! Needless to say, my feelings were mixed: There was the relief that there seemed to be no immediate plot against my life that i need concern myself with overmuch; yet there was the bottomless anguish i felt when i realized that my treasured Olympia™ clock was, in essence, shot. I inspected further: The clock mechanism itself is rather simple — it's just a big, slowly-rotating Rolodex™-like spindle of numerals, and slowly, inexorably [or, again, perhaps merely exorably], a tiny metal finger which holds the top half of the front numeral in place draws back, ever back, until it ever-so-briefly retreats entirely, allowing the numeral to flip over and a new numeral to take its place, and the process continues in like fashion for, oh, i dunno, sixteen years, and then you're fucked! Try as i might, i could not wiggle, bang, or smash my Olympia™ clock into proper adherence to code! It's shot! Flat out fucked! Thusly springeth my lament! This is no mere beer clock! Not at all! This clock is like, i dunno, my dog or something ["Clock In My Pocket" — "I Wanna Be Your Dog" — the Stooges references are quite optional and left as an exercise for the reader!] And now Dad has to shoot Old Yeller! Christ! Pass the Pucker™! It should almost go without saying that, within 48 hours of my Olympia™ clock croaking, there was that huge earthquake that had Olympia, Washington as its epicenter, but i said it anyway! So there!) The artist formerly known as "Paul #1," now referred to as "Paulie The Prophet," had, on numerous occasions, informed me that, were i, at any time, to quit not drinking, that i would be almost immediately given over, body and soul, to the almighty girlie-demon-god PUCKER™, and, in this, he was absolutely correct! I mean, Boone's Farm™ was awright...White Mountain Wine Coolers (technically "flavored beer" if you ever bothered to read the label) had their moments...but PUCKER™ is a whole new ball game! It is a fluid so perfect, so advanced, that i have a hard time believing that it was not concocted by some old enemy of mine — those animated Turkey Nuggets, perhaps, or even some manner of Lefty Hooligan/NOFX/Pansy Division coalition — just to keep me in my place! I mean, i KNOW it's a trap, but i go willingly! Just keep them shots o' Nørb-bait comin', innkeeper! The great thing is, just like Jolly Rancher™ candies, the Grape and the Peach variants on the theme kinda don't taste at all correct (a little too Mad Dog oriented for my cultured palate), and can therefore be eliminated from relevance almost immediately, kinda like orange SweetTarts™ or Jolly

Rancher Fire Stix™ can be immediately disregarded in any circumstance that demands swift and sure Candy Action! However, as is well documented in the holy books of our culture, out of the myriad varieties of Jolly Rancher™ on the market, there are but four supremely great flavors — all evincing a nigh-on supernatural capacity for the dual sweet/sour whompus that lies at the fundamental basis of all things great and wondrous: Green Apple, Watermelon, Cherry, and Lemon — with the ever-rare Raspberry as an optional fifth since one rarely comes across that particular flavor of Jolly Rancher™, and, even if ya did, it tastes and looks more or less like Cherry anyway! So, too, does the hallowed liquid Pucker™ almost mirror this flavorful oligarchy: There is Green Apple, there is Watermelon, and there is Cheri-Beri, which wisely consolidates both worthwhile Red flavors — Cherry and Raspberry — into one convenient dosage! The only thing really keeping Pucker™ from laying permanent claim to the ever-in-demand "Best Possible Alcoholic Beverage, Ever" award is their conspicuous lack (to my knowledge) of a Lemon flavor Pucker™! Without the all-important Lemon Pucker™, some also-ran, charlatan, or other meager huckster could, in fact, get lucky, and come out with some manner of Lemon-flavored alcoholic beverage possessed of such incredible citrus zap as to render the Three Major Puckers essentially irrelevant! I warn thee, Dekuypers™ Co., Concoctors Of The Pucker™, Peers Of The Realm — look not to thine laurels, for, until thine task of manufacturing the Yellow Pucker™ is thru, thou art nothing but puckering on borrowed time! So sayeth Rev. Nørb!!! Needless to say, within approximately 36 hours of resuming drinking, i had already buried myself chin-deep in Pucker™, and had even gone so far as to have invented what is surely, as of 2:54, the **GREATEST DRINK OF ALL TIME: The Stoplight™!** With no yellow Pucker™ at my disposal, of course, i had to incorporate beer into the equation, but the end results most certainly justify my usage of impure fluids! The Stoplight™ is constructed as follows: 1) Receive one shot of any manner of red-oriented Pucker™ (either Cheri-Beri or the pinkish Watermelon will serve)! 2) Receive one shot of Green Pucker™! 3) Receive, preferably in a clear pint glass, one tap beer of your choosing, excluding any manner of corrupted beer-product that lacks yellowness! 4) Put the green shot on one side of the yellow beer, and the red shot on the opposite side of the yellow beer! 5) Drink by rotating sips, taking great care not to drain one glass before the other two are ready to be drained! **THIS IS THE STOPLIGHT!!!** ...yes, it is admittedly cumbersome; tripartite drinks tend to be that way! But it is the **BEST LOOKING** and **BEST TASTING** drink ever conceived by man born of woman! *And i thought of it not 36 hours after i resumed drinking!* Why, the Beer Industry had **TEN YEARS** to do something great in my absentia, and the best they could do was the plastic bottle! For shame! Of course, the Stoplight is not without its downsides: Large concentrations of Pucker™ tend to irritate one's gastrointestinal tract in those certain special ways that only substances which are 70% sugar, 15% alcohol, and the remainder Fruit Goo can do! Be strong! Live to Puck another day! The night after first inventing the Stoplight™, i was happily filing photos of strippers and cover bands at work, when i, not surprisingly, chanced to pass wind. I thought little of the strange flapping and bubbling noises coming from my hindquarters during this action, but my flippancy quickly dissolved upon resuming a seated position: By the sensations of unfamiliar warmth and wetness upon my posterior, i quickly was made aware of the fact that the back of my underwear had been recently soiled by a noticeably non-zero quantity of, for want of a better term, "aerosol effluvium." The bottom line is this: Within 48 hours of resuming drinking, i had not only invented the **GREATEST DRINK OF ALL TIME** but essentially shit my pants as well. **HAVE AT THEE, POSEURS!!!** Oh, and ya wanna make out? +

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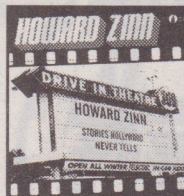


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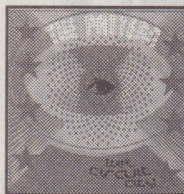


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**Jeff, Dan and Steve of TSAR
interviewed by Adam X and
Brett Mathews**

BAM: So guys, where did the name come from?

JEFF: uhhhh, 19th Century Russia. Simply put we were called DRUGBOY, then it became DRUG CZAR then it became TSAR.

BAM: How long was it DRUGBOY?

JEFF: Well never really, it was just me and Dan.

DAN: It was a concept slash project.

JEFF: It was when Dan and I had just moved to L.A. and we couldn't find anyone to play with. We'd look through the club and band listings and there were like a million bands with bad names and we'd be like, well who wants to see these bands? I mean who wants to see umm...

STEVE: SHUFFLEPUCK!

JEFF: Woah, Steve! Unlike Steve to slag a friend's band. Well, so I thought what band would everybody want to see? and I thought...well...DRUGBOY! We should be DRUGBOY! We'd have all these girls call record stores and clubs asking for DRUGBOY and we'd be a famous, hip band before we even played a note. Anyways, me and Dan recorded demos, but we never played live if that's the question.

BAM: So, by the time you guys played your first official live show it was actually TSAR then?

JEFF: We played a few times under STUPID GIRL, but that was only with half these members. Me and Dan and some weirdos. It wasn't quite the same thing.

BAM: With the spelling and a name that doesn't quite stick in the mind, have you come across any typos or drawbacks?

JEFF: YEAH. Well there's a lot of drawbacks from the name, ya know? When you just say TSAR if the person's halfway intelligent they think you mean CZ(ar). Most of the time they don't know what you're saying. It hasn't been a blessing. I think it's a kickass name. When we were on the Craig Kilborn Show a couple weeks ago and he goes "Here's ZARRR!" Who would be able to know how it's spelt to find it in the stores? In some ways it's been unfortunate, but eventually it will be real cool once everyone knows how to spell it.

Photos by Chuck Worthy

TSAR 12/ 7
Phoenix
Hotel



BAM: So when you say you were new to L.A. Where had you moved from?

JEFF: I moved from Prague, Dan moved from Chico.

STEVE:both in Northern California..hahaha

JEFF: California...yeah, both bleak, awful places. We were both from Southern California originally, we just weren't living there.

BAM: Were you guys all united by a want ad or how did it come together?

JEFF: It's a long boring story.

BAM: You got a short exciting version of it?

JEFF: Yeah we met at an audition for a boy band.

DAN: None of us made the cut.

STEVE: We said "Hey, screw those guys! We'll go start our own band!"

BAM: What influences were you listening to when you lived in Prague?

JEFF: It was really weird, because they have a really great bootleg selection there. I was mostly listening to live or studio or bedroom NIRVANA bootlegs. Every band there is like a bunch of guys with beards and acoustic guitars and saxophones.

STEVE: They have great tribute bands there that sonically sound like let's say the ROLLING STONES, but they are like bald, 37 yr old guys strutting around like Mick Jagger.

JEFF: They've made no effort to look like them and they learn all the words completely just phonetically and they're called "Revival" bands. My band stole their drummer so we got to play with them like 7 or 8 times.

BAM: What did your band over there sound like?

JEFF: ...like bootlegged NIRVANA. Seriously it did. That was all I was listening to. That's all I cared about at the time.

BAM: I mean as underground rock as you are, you can definitely hear the obvious CHEAP TRICK, RICK SPRINGFIELD, "We Built This City on Rock 'n Roll"-era STARSHIP. I mean you hear a lot of the mainstream radio pop hits in there. I ask because I'm kinda

wondering how it all came together to make the sound that is TSAR.

JEFF: Well, it's so weird because so many people have definite ideas of what we sound like. Either fortunately or unfortunately that's not the first "Knee Deep in the Hoopla Era" reference we've gotten. Although that is the first Rick Springfield one to my knowledge.

STEVE: Yeah, are you talking "Working Class Dog"?

BAM: Greatest album ever made.

JEFF: Bitch, please. Hey, me and Solomon(bassist) saw him at the Orange County Fair 2 1/2 years ago. No, so what do I think TSAR sounds like? I'll be all prententious enough to say it sounds like us. We have our influences but oddly enough as much as we get compared to CHEAP TRICK, I don't count them as an influence. I don't own a CHEAP TRICK record.

STEVE: I'm the only guy in the band who owns a CHEAP TRICK record.

DAN: That's not true! I have one. The only one that you should have, *Live at Budokan*. It doesn't matter like what album you own or what you consider your influences because no one can avoid some albums such as "One Night at Budokan."

JEFF: I've never been insulted by anything anyone has ever compared us to. Very few band's that we are ever compared to are bad.

STEVE: We've been labeled everything. First we were a glam band, we've been 80's metal, we've been RADIOHEAD, we've been early glitter glam..

JEFF: But then on the Craig Kilborn show he goes "Next is a punk band from the City of Angels!"??

STEVE: When your album first comes out and you get your first few reviews you go, "No, that's wrong!" and you feel misperceived but after awhile of being compared to every fucking thing you can imagine, you can stand back and go... "well no, that's right." We're just like putting everything in there.

JEFF: Only in the same way that like, white is all colors. Pure light is what we're talking about.

DAN: Yeah, 'cuz when you combine light, all colors make white. When you combine pigment, they make black. Don't make me start this argument.

BAM: So basically when you walk into a record store you want it filed under rock



and that's all that matters?

JEFF: One answer that we kinda give when people asked about the name is that we wanted to be filed between T-REX and TSOL.

BAM: So while the music is quite rock, the image is all over the place. Can you explain that?

JEFF: I have a teen girl obsession that kinda fuels my look. I wanna look like a teen girl and act like a teen girl and smell like a teen girl and ...

DAN: I always wonder in the mall when they walk by and they smell so good, do I smell equally as bad?

BAM: Is Cathy Fong a teen girl?

JEFF: She was the girl that worked in the record store..... she was the hot ticket..... she was a spicy meatball.

STEVE: She was cooking with gas.

JEFF: Outside the name that's the next question we get asked most.

BAM: Does she know your song's about her?

JEFF: I don't know if she's ever put together who I am and she's never contacted me once.

X: Let's talk about how your deal happened and why you chose Hollywood Records.

JEFF: Rob Cavallo was the guy who seemed the most sincere in thinking our band was cool.

STEVE: Of all our suitors, he was the cutest, most polite, and nicest to our parents.

JEFF: Yeah, I don't think record companies really understand the power of personal affection. They think that they're being cool just by buying a band drinks and taking them to dinner when both sides know they're not interested. The ones that are real sincere behave differently.

DAN: Rob was such a person.

JEFF: Getting signed was the easiest thing

we've ever done. Getting the band together, making the record, making the record known to people has been the hard part.

BAM: So, you guys were based in L.A. home of a million bands, together 6 months, on your 3rd name, and there were major labels courting you? Why was that?

JEFF: At the time I thought it was because we were so fuckin' awesome. I'm sure it had something to do with it but it really was more luck than I admitted at the time. I thought the tide had turned and our kind of music was gonna swallow the world. Actually, we got lucky and played at a barbecue with Possum Dixon, where we

got our manager, Coach Tom Atencio.

X: I'd like to know how different your songs were before Rob got involved and produced you.

JEFF: They weren't that much different. He's the kind of producer who thinks he's a producer and not the font of all music.

STEVE: The most important thing that Rob did was bring out individual performances. There was no massive reconstruction of the songs.

DAN: He would have a lot of ideas, but with no arrogance at all.

JEFF: And we didn't use any of our own stuff gearwise.

BAM: So how many of the songs you

"oddly enough, as much as we get compared to CHEAP TRICK, I don't count them as



were playing from the time you were signed made the album?

JEFF: All of them plus a couple. Our initial sets were 7 songs.

DAN: Here's a secret for band's that are trying to get signed. Stop trying to go play 14 songs, go out and play 4 and see how that goes over. Have 14 great songs and play 5. Always leave the audience wanting more without boring them.

STEVE: More importantly, leave the band wanting to play more. We get blue balls. I'm always wanting to play more.

JEFF: When you play short like that and it's going over, it's easy to do 1 or 2 encores and look like a hero.

X: Back to the CD, care to explain the artwork on it?

JEFF: It's my least favorite thing about the record. I felt like one night God told me not to put that on the cover.

X: Was it suppose to represent something or a message you were tryin to convey?

Jeff: I'd rather not talk about it.

Steve: We had tried to commission a painting and it wasn't everything we had hoped.

X: Are there any other recordings of TSAR members or other songs in the vault?

STEVE: You can find a live version of "Silver Shifter" on Blue Room Small Theater Group in Chico California's 500 CD pressing. It sounds amazing if you can find it.

JEFF: It's at Amazon.com. We have b-sides for singles in the vault as well.

X: It's clear that "Silver Shifter" is a sure fire radio hit. Will that be the next single?

JEFF: Yes it is. Now, Rob Cavallo suggested I make it clearer what I was talkin' about with that song, but I wanted to keep it oblique so that my then girlfriend wouldn't know what I was talking about.

BAM: Any aspect of success that scares the band?

JEFF: Yeah but we're supposed to be real popular. That's the idea. (note: Jeff fuddles for beer) Hey, there's no beer! That's how popular we are. I think that I'd like to be real popular. It seems like more

fun. Especially hearing people argue over your lyrics. There's something uniquely rewarding about fans. I don't want this CD to be a cult classic.

BAM: Did you find anything out on the road opening for major acts such as DURAN DURAN and MARVELOUS 3?

JEFF: Yeah, we found out a lot. A LOT!

STEVE: Drugs are a lot harder to get out on the road than people lead you to believe.

JEFF: When you're opening for DURAN DURAN, people still think that you're some kind of larger than life person even if they've never heard of you before.

X: Now that you've toured coast to coast, tell me. Where is the rock?

JEFF: It's in the South.

STEVE: The Southeast.

JEFF: Not the deep south, but the shallow south.

STEVE: Northern Florida, Carolina's kicked some ass, they know what they're doing.

JEFF: They come and they press themselves as close as they can to the stage. We were soundchecking in Atlanta and we weren't done when they opened the doors and they came in running and screaming. I dropped my guitar and just got off the stage because I'd never experienced anything like that before. They were just excited to be coming to a concert.

STEVE: It's all about tapping that kinda energy and the Southeast has it.

X: Growing up, what bands made you want to be a part of it?

JEFF: BEATLES "Hard Day's Night" and TEENAGE FAN CLUB on the "13" Tour.

STEVE: GUNS 'N ROSES

JEFF: GUNS 'N ROSES with STONES definitely and I wasn't even a fan until I saw that show.

DAN: Just a lot of albums.

JEFF: Solomon would say URGE OVERKILL.

X: Any bands out there at it now you'd like the readers to know about?

JEFF: CHAMPION, PHANTOM PLANET

STEVE: CHAMPION and MARVELOUS 3

X: Any peculiar experiences from playing something as national as the LATE LATE SHOW?

JEFF: One of my favorite bands the POOH

STICKS' producer wrote me an awesome email. Also I didn't expect Solomon to break a string on the first note.

DAN: And Craig Kilborn is 4 feet tall. He looks really tall but they just book really small crowds in there.

DAN: We got a call while backstage in Raleigh, North Carolina to fly to the show the next day, so it all happened so fast.

STEVE: They show the band last but they record the band first.

JEFF: You can't wear white and... you can't say FUCK.

I mean, FUCK that! and to be quite honest, I've seen people wear white too. It's a different kind of charge.

STEVE: It's not an energy you're used to. It's 4:30 in the afternoon, but you're trying to feel the moment.

Jeff: It's not like you can get off to a shakey start and kill em in the end.

BAM: Ok so with you guys having been on the road so much, have you been able to write?

JEFF: Oh no, not at all. It all depends on how much success we have with this record right now.

DAN: It probably won't be for another year before we start considering another record.

JEFF: We have yet begun to fight for attention with this record. We got to take it international and release at least 4 more singles. I'd like to release 8 singles.

X: Since your CD is available everywhere and it's your mission to turn the world on to the album, here's your chance to give the readers a reason to go buy it.

JEFF: I don't feel that I need to do that.

DAN: The album is fucking great. Go buy it and if you don't like it return it. Fuck, who cares?

JEFF: No, no, no. If you don't like it, give it to some nerd. It's a rock record unlike any rock record ever made. It's also like every rock record ever made. It's my favourite record of the year. I feel foolish for having said it myself.

STEVE: The name's right there on the cover. The good rock's on the inside. Go out and buy it and I defy you not to try to start a band of your own once you listen to it.

BAM: And you're at Tsar.com?

JEFF: TSAR.NET, yeah, well you know.... Stay off the web, you LOSERS!!!



THE STATE OF ROCK AND POP MUSIC: 2000, THE YEAR OF THE STATUS QUO

2000 may well go down in history as the year of inertia. It sure felt like an instant replay.

Last year in this space, I said, "1999? Could it have been even worse than 1998? Could it! The music world is in a protracted slump, worse than the lull of 1987-1989, and perhaps worse than any significant span since 1972-1975."

Therefore, what of 2000? Could it have been even worse than 1999? The answer this time... is...no. Thankfully, no. But neither

effect, and conservative retro-indie pop with ineffectual or half-assed songwriting. The only perceivable shift was a peripheral one, and a regrettable one at that: Going from bad to worse, or merely decayed to rotten, record buyers scarfed up far less banal and lifeless, watered-down folk-rock, toothless modern country, and lifeless adult-oriented pop pap. In its place they bought infinitely more obnoxious, turgid alterna-metal and in-your-face rap-rock of even less substance. Gag!

PART ONE: THE MAINSTREAM

Let me break from my usual penchant and start with an analysis of the mainstream music scene, and save my comments on the underground for last, since this year at least, I have far more to say on the condition of the former.

And yes, I am aware that most readers of *Hit List* rarely give a thought to popular music. But I speak of it here as a continuing thesis on what's (seemingly) permanently wrong with our culture, which is why we've embraced and supported an underground for so long. When our charts actually have plenty of room for massive talents (as in the '60s, though, like in any era, there was plenty of dreck then, too), by definition there is less of an urgent, nay, crucial need for grassroots artists to make sure that the art of music remains a vehicle for more honest and impassioned rock 'n' roll and pop expression. Besides that, also by definition, what actually sells in any given year is the surest indication of what type of music record companies will fund in the nearest future, at the expense of better music they could be subsidizing. As strange as it seems now, when I was a kid, not very long ago, I bought all my Sex Pistols, Clash, Stranglers, Ramones, Television, Gang of Four, New York Dolls, Stooges, Dead Boys, MC5, Velvet Underground, and even Saints LPs via major label distribution. So it's not a minor point, in my view, how far we've fallen even from that low standard.

In any case, cogent complaints about 2000's biggest artists must by now start to sound like a broken record. Yet on the *Billboard* charts, on the radio and TV, and in the magazines, as in the general mood, it seemed like nothing much really changed. Last year I noted, as my local New York weekly *The Village Voice* quoted, that "There wasn't a single Top 40 hit song or multi-platinum LP produced in 1999 that will

ever be played with that kind of regularity on any oldies stations in the year 2029. Not one."

Ditto for 2000. Can anyone point to a single hit song that might replace, say, "Heard It Through the Grapevine," "Tears of a Clown," "Dock of the Bay," "California Dreaming," "You Really Got Me," "The Great Pretender," "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Don't Worry Baby," or "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," in heavy

rotation on oldies stations in 2030? The closest was probably the infectious if disposable Baha Men single, if for no reason than that uptempo, feel-good, time-out-on-the-field novelty sing-alongs (or bark-alongs, as the case may be) have a habit of hanging around (though notice that outside of sporting arenas, Blur's "Woo-Hoo" "Song 2" has already disappeared from our culture, and is even waning in those are-

**Therefore, what of
2000? Could it have been
even worse than 1999?
The answer this
time...is...no.**



was it so much better that we can take any comfort in projecting the immediate future. More good stuff happened, at least in the indie rock and pop scenes (nothing much changed in the mainstream, unfortunately; even the rather fascinating Radiohead didn't hit the top 25 in sales for the year), but even then, how much of it really registered or signified for the long haul?

Instead, 2000 might go down as the year of near-total inertia. You look back 12 months for significance, you find little. You search for hot flashes of relevant change that portend something of note, and you merely shrug. A lot of folks just spun their wheels, again, like during the last few years, searching for an elusive new scene, sound, style, trend, or movement that would energize, galvanize, and inspire, both in the mainstream and the underground. But really, for the most part, all that bubbled up to the surface was more of the same old same old. 2000 was just more shallow posturing, pathetic teen come-ons, bump and grind sex-selling, self-obsessed fake-macho bad-ass rapping complete with puerile one-upmanship, snickering irono-clasts with no passion of their own to offer as a contrast, excessive noodling with technology to little human

nas). And in that sense, "Who Let the Dogs Out" is, I suppose, slightly more fun than some of the oldies-station novelty crap like "Itsy Witsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka-Dot Bikini" and "Yummy, Yummy, Yummy" I'd be glad to never hear again. But the flipside of mere novelty hits, as any Dr. Demento fan like myself could tell you, is that for all the smiles and laughs they might (or might not) produce for a short while, they're like skipping the meal to get to the desert. And current pop nourishment has created a famine of East African proportions.

Indeed, what so-called more "serious" artists captivated the pop world in 2000? At the risk of redundancy, let me again return to what I said last year on the state of the multi-platinum artists. I believe the same point is just as valid in 2000, in the year that nothing substantial changed:

"Looking over the Top 20 LP sellers of 1999, the feeling is like that of retching after being force-fed this ghastly diet for 12 months. In addition to The Backstreet Boys (8.2 million) and Ms. Spears (7.2 million), we also got 'N Sync's two year old waste-product (3 million), Christina Aguilera (2.5 million), 98 Degrees (2.3 million), and the previous Backstreet Boys "opus" (1.9 million). All told, this miserable list adds up to 25 million LPs sold, mostly to people of ages 10-17, because let's face it, no one else in their right mind would ever go near this fluff but immature minds. What all this proves is that America's kids have far too much disposable income, and that the market has come around to serving them exclusively at the expense of giving them something they might actually like when they grow up, let alone giving anyone who has grown up anything to listen to."

Now, looking over the Top 20 LP sellers of 2000, what did we get? The same dubious roll call with the same conclusions: The Backstreet Boys (4.1 million), Ms. Spears (7.7 million), 'N Sync (a staggering 9.8 million of the hideous "No Strings Attached"), and Christina Aguilera (3.7 million). i.e., another 25 million LPs sold of this supreme aural junk food. An absolutely staggering 50,000,000 LPs over two years of this teen pop caca!!! Holy Minneola! Fuck drugs for the youngest generation, they don't need 'em; they've got to be drugged to stupefaction sucking on this barren tit. It's like 50,000,000 hits of valium, like taking ecstasy without the slightest hint of any ecstasy. What kind of null and comfortably numb subset of pre-college age young adults parts with somewhere between \$500,000,000 and \$900,000,000 of its allowance money over two years for the right to be so stunada?

And while we did get rid of the most stagnant mania of 1998, the transparent hits-LP-disguised-as-a-so-called-"soundtrack"-LP, as opposed to music actually composed for films like the great Morricone, Mancini, Chaplin, and Herrmann (the second straight year this cynical repackaging failed to replicate Titanic's titanic sales), the teen-pop stranglehold is showing no signs of waning: Of the big five, only 98 Degrees fell off the loftiest perch, though "Revelations" still sold appreciably. One can only wonder what other precociously cute and curvy kids, especially those appealing to the pedophile in adults, will soon be foisted on us ad nauseam to replicate the runaway success of this pabulum. Oops!...I did it again, as this phrase might be the industry A&R anthem of shame for the last few years. And shame on them

JACKRABID

all for doing it to us again and again. Once upon a time, a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, many A&R scouts and even a good deal of major record executives like famed Atlantic boss Ahmet Ertegun and Warners' honcho Mo Austin, actually liked the music produced by the acts they signed (and they signed many a good one). At worst they could be accused of poor taste, not the total abdication of the concept itself. Now you wonder if any of these folks ever could be caught dead actually listening, in the privacy of their own homes, to the music they promote and distribute.

Taste? This sub-prom-date bulldinky flat out sucks. That we as a culture celebrate it merely because it sells boatloads to people with no (or bad, or too undeveloped) taste is a telling indictment of our own inability to display any taste ourselves. That's our own complicity.

Perhaps no one knows this better than the blind, who likely miss out on the whole "value" of these folks' award-winning music completely. i.e., divorced from the visuals of these teen artists' looks and clothes, what do they really have to offer? It's true, for most males, Ms. Aguilera and Ms. Spears are good to look at, as they shake their still-ripening T and A for all to see on our MTV (What's the difference between Ms. Spears' awards ceremony strip show and your average act at Scores? Answer: She gets her pay stuffed in her mailbox instead of in her last-refuge bra), trace their left-chests with their fingers whenever they sing the word "heart" and point to themselves when they sing the word "I." (Jeez...Such winning choreography.) As are, I gather, the boy bands in the eyes of their teeny-bopper adolescent screaming-girl fans. (Did any males of any age contribute to

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HIT SQUAD

those 9.8 million of sales N-Sync racked up? We've come a long way since girl teens screamed for Sinatra, Elvis, or the Beatles instead.)

But that just reinforces why these kids are signed and promoted by a cynical and sickening industry. If Ms. Spears looked like Janis Joplin, say, would she be getting all that money to back her, and would she be doing those dance steps and that striptease act on TV? Even super-models can't get a lasting foothold in the movies unless they demonstrate they can actually act a little, a condition apparently not imposed on today's model-esque high school pop singers. I had a good laugh when the readers of *Spin* rated Spears as the top "Sex Goddess" in pop today, in a landslide, while also rating her the second worst artist - behind only Fred Durst's contemptible crew, Limp Bizkit (or, as that music-teacher singing-lady character called them on a recent "Saturday Night Live," Limp Bizquick"). These *Spin* poll respondents spoke simple volumes about Spears' sole "talents." It makes you think Charlie's Angels' Cheryl Ladd's non-starting recording career 25 years ago was just ill-timed. Hell, she looked damn good in a bikini on the show, I remember all too well, when I was of a similar age. I guess she should have worn one on stage and on her record covers, too! Now where was her manager on that one?

Or better yet, Ladd should have tried the current trick of favor: She should have appeared naked and just covered up her nipples and genitals with her limbs, as it seems we find on every magazine cover on the stand...That's sure to make folks focus on a recording artists' or actresses' work, right?

(On the flipside, the only good news of 2000 might be that the antecedent model of platinum pre-college fluff, Hanson, totally stiffed, as in super-turkey! They didn't even go gold after selling four million of "Middle of Nowhere." Even more surprising but just as welcome, both the Spice Girls - Forever? Try Here Today, Gone Tomorrow - and Ricky Martin - Sound Loaded? Try Downloaded - released LPs in 2000 and seemingly no one noticed. Yes!!! Perhaps both of these insipid pretty boy/pretty girl clowns will both just burn out and fade away. At least here. The Spice Girls still sell like hot chocolate in a blizzard in their native England, sadly. And if you've seen how girls in England are dressing now, as evidenced by my trip last May, I'd say for good or for ill, they're the main fashion influence there, too. Odd, that.)

To be sure, clichéd, overly rote music recorded expressly for 13-year-olds is not a new phenomenon. I'm too young to remember the Philadelphia crooners like Frankie Avalon, but I can remember my sister buying a stack of Bobby Sherman albums in the mid-'70s. My sis played his records constantly and sang along to them in her bedroom (though she didn't have his picture plastered all over her wall like that character in the recent insipid period comedy, "Dick"). There were many other bad bopper-idols to tempt her and her friends, such as David Cassidy, Shaun Cassidy, and later Debbie Gibson. But none of these "artists" achieved anywhere near the LP domination today's weeny-pop acts do. And by the time my sister hit 15, for chrissakes, she graduated to something of much greater complexity/sincerity/thoughtfulness - in her case Janis Ian. I heard a lot of "At Seventeen" in 1976/77, as did a lot of brothers of high school sisters that year, I suppose.

And though I never much cared for that sappy song, or for Ian, it was still an involving set of concerns for a growing mind, and I recognize it now as the step my sister took on her way to Billy Joel and The Eagles - artists I like even less, but emblematic of the maturation process of a typical 1970's female as she moved from junior high towards university. We saw the same thing in the '80s as young women went from Duran Duran at 14 to U2 at 16 to Lush and the Breeders at 18. Whereas today, it seems, the weeny-pop brigade is

actually the desired destination for growing-adult women. They don't seem to be going anyway from here. Janis Ian sounds like Ani DiFranco compared to what 18-year-old women are listening to today, from my recent experience:

As an assistant coach of an urban Newark high school girls softball team, I've detected no trace of musical graduation in the all-female student body as they've grown older and even moved on to college. Their tastes are slightly blacker, better than the teen-queens, but the music is more or less cut from the same tired cloth-oversung soul-pop by dancing, heavy-breathing females who like to show their asses and use the word "baby" (sung "bayyy-hey---bee-heeee") in a sentence more often than Barry White. Ugh.

And as far as our male kids, if they are graduating to something less immature and transparent, they head to...what, Creed (6.4 million)? Limp Bizkit (3.5 million)? Kid Rock (2.7 million)? Papa Roach (2.6 million)? Matchbox 20 (2.2 million)? Korn? Incubus? Slipknot? Blink 182? Godsmack? Fuel? This stuff is pretty painful to listen to. As much as I was stoned bored by the Wallflowers and didn't get the respectable Joan Osborne, two much smarter artists that were also massive flops this past year, they seem like Dylan Sr. and his one-time girl pal Joan Baez compared to this parade of losers! (Likewise, the horrific, older alterna-metal smashes of the immediate post-Nirvana era, Smashing Pumpkins, Stone Temple Pilots, Bush, and Soundgarden, nearly sound like the Sex Pistols, Clash, Dead Boys, and Ramones in comparison.)

Sadly, I know this from a smaller personal experience, too. This is the drive my otherwise beloved, rather smart and interesting 18-year old nephew admires. I had hopes for him, since the days a few years ago when he told me he liked R.E.M. and Nirvana and was into "Alternative Rock like you are." I had hoped he might make some use of his uncle's publication, which I've sent him twice a year, with tips on more groups in the same vein as good as those. Instead, his taste seems to have regressed, unlike my sister's. Basically, he only listens to what his local Commercial Alternative radio station is giving him, and that station doesn't have any more Belly, Breeders, Cobain, Stipe, or Bad Religion, or any of the other myriad, genuinely great bands for him. A mere five years later, those bands, or any like them, are so persona non grata or M.I.A. on those stations, it might as well be "Classic Rock" from 30 years ago I speak of. So it's Korn and Limp Bizkit in his hit parade. It's been really sad to watch, like if those '80s girls had gone from the Breeders and Lush to U2 and then to Duran Duran instead. (He's a great kid and I mean him no harm in saying this. And I am sure he thinks his taste is improving, not devolving, so it's a mere disagreement between us, but still it makes me sorry. It just seems to be the way things have been going for his generation. We could have had so much musically to discuss, him and I. We had more when he was 13!)

Can it be said? The final casualty of mainstream music America seems to be the brain. Only the most minuscule handful of artists that sell any records nowadays have anything of any kind to say about anything going on in our times. These are, as ever, black artists. How I wish that I actually liked rap! At least rappers view lyrics as an opportunity to speak their minds on topics important to them, for better or worse - if too often for worse, that's true. It reminds me of that old Clash lyric, of the disillusioned Joe Strummer at the reggae show in Hammersmith Palais: "If they've got anything to say, there's plenty of black ears here to listen." But it's also true that like the "Four Tops all night and encores from stage right" Strummer decried, in contemporary rap it seems too often to be a golden opportunity wasted.

Of course, not being a fan, I hear so much of it only by osmosis, walking around New York and Newark. But I always key in on the words when I encounter it, to see what the so-called "Black CNN" is commenting on. Too much of it is still apparently self-referential, it all seems so selfish, so "me me me me me me." As for what actually sold bigtime, I'm afraid I heard too little of Dr. Dre's latest (3.9 million) to

comment, and what I heard of Nelly (4.8 million) I didn't care for, but lord knows we all heard too much of Eminem (7.8 million), the hottest and best rapper by far, even though he is white (well, his skin color is, the rest of him isn't) this year. He might well be the most wasted opportunity of all. He is the "me me me me"-ist of them all.

This kid I'm torn over. You have to admit he's got some talent, in words, in delivery, even in some real vocal hooks that rap doesn't always specialize in. But aside from that whole "me me me" crap I loathe so much, he gives his critics far too much ammunition with some of that garbage he spews. I'm told it's only a minority of what he says, and I hear that, but he just comes across as immature, bigoted, and self-obsessive, the stuff he writes about his mother, gays, and his missus. In fact, he may be all those things, it's a fair conclusion on the merits. Even when he takes on the Teen Queens, a truly worthy topic for sure for his scathing wit and keen sense of putdown humor, he attacks them because he's unhappy he's being lumped in with them, not because they are a cancer to our culture. More immaturity that's unnecessary in such a smart mind. The media, by definition, is going to focus on whatever distracting controversy he hands them, not on anything of substance he might have to say. Such a waste of talent, of potential.

Then again, I have long wondered if it is impossible to ever think that the most popular rappers might drop some of the full-time swagger (it was already bad enough in most overblown white rock acts of the last 30 years) someday. Will they ever shitcan all those egoistic gesticulations and testimonials to their toughness and prowess and desirability, and get back to vital social comment? There are a few out there, I know, out of mass public view, just as the best rock lyricism is being made by musicians rarely supported by any media - the kind I obsess over. But even then, I also think rap is still too unmelodic for my taste to ever really be much to me other than a set of rhymes with lots of streetisms. That just doesn't do it for me, still. Instead, you'll still find me listening to my old soul and R&B records of yesteryear, when blacks sung instead of chanted about "what's going on." I am a music fan, not a chanted poetry fan, and so even when I like the words in rap, I'd just as soon read them on a printed page.

(Caveat: Some of the trip-hop and pop-hop I've heard is rather nice, though most of what I've heard admittedly is made my whites like Broadcast and Moby. At least the tune is a concept that's reintroduced as an important element, which is what I require. I didn't love either enough to put them in my Top 10 singles, though, but they were both close.)

So was there anyone at all in the mainstream that sold millions of records that made me happy in 2000, either as a fan myself, or as seven-time uncle and assistant coach? Yeah, I guess there was one after all. The sad thing is that they've been broken up for 31 years. Hell, I was a member of their fan club when I was six. Let's just say that the Beatles I (4.6 million) is about the oldest news to me there is in my life. I can vividly remember playing those songs on my parents' bulky living room hi-fi when they were first released, before men even walked on the moon, when I was in kindergarten. I suppose there is some value to the way all the Beatles' anthologies, reissues, compilations, books, videos, t-shirts, and coffee mugs sell like hotcakes every time Capitol or Apple decides that coffers are looking a bit spare. Every new generation, even this current one that wasn't even born when Lennon was gunned down, gets another fair and complete shot at their sheer genius.

I'm all for the eternal promotion and dissemination of this band, the greatest artists of the 20th century (by far, well ahead of all their competition that didn't write their own material: Armstrong and Sinatra primarily, and maybe Presley). And I contend it is proof of the Beatles' monumental brilliance that they've never had to be placed in any historical context to enthrall new listeners decade after decade. If their music can still sell in such numbers in 2000, commensurate with

those seen at the height of Beatlemania 36 years ago, there may yet be hope for the young, that they might yet get the hint and produce something worth buying 36 years from now on such a grand scale. But since the Beatles seem as lonesome in the Top 50 LP sellers of 2000 as a committed atheist at a Billy Graham revival, it seems we are condemned to be given this seed year after year, only to see it sown on concrete instead of any topsoil worth tilling. Methinks the industry in particular is missing the biggest hint they could ever be given, and they've been missing it steadily since "Beatles at the BBC" kicked off this wave seven years ago. Truly remarkable music never stops selling in mass quantities, year after year, long after the people who make it call it a day, or even perish. And most of all, long after the initial marketing campaign has faded from memory.

Perhaps the only argument that could be made for Mainstream 2000 then, would be Radiohead's fascinating "Kid A." But it's a weak argument. For one thing, interesting as it is, "Kid A" is not really a step forward for this brilliant, creative, and intelligent band. The near-total lack of songs on the LP killed that potential, and that's too bad. If Berlin-era Bowie, and more recent My Bloody Valentine and Flaming Lips still managed to write songs despite their degree of wild experimentation with sound, than Radiohead has no excuse for a mere soundtrack LP. It's a fine and engaging album for sure, one that makes for great headphones listening, and I do like it a lot. It's also far more singular and maybe even revolutionary than what they'd been doing before. It's just half as good as what they'd been doing before. And that counts for most.

Moreover, for all their deserved coverage in the magazines (my own *The Big Takeover* included, with pleasure), and their clout with rock fans searching for a way out of the morass (they won every top spot in *Spin's* poll other than "sex gods!!"), "Kid A" didn't crack the Top 25 in sales. They were badly outsold by inherently lesser, and less hyped rock acts like 3 Doors Down (3.7 million), and were trounced by the lightweight country likes of the Dixie Chicks (3.4 million) and Faith Hill (3.2 million). Even two volumes of "Now That's What I Call Music" (2.8 and 2.3 million) and Celine Dion (2.7 million) and Santana of all people (a whopping 5.8 million) slapped Radiohead silly for sales. That doesn't mean those LPs are better than "Kid A," or are more important because they sold more, it just means that Radiohead's bold step failed to really connect with the pop world as a whole - not like any of us had hoped when the LP was originally announced, before we all heard it.

In fact, lest there be any mistake, I do admire the hell out of Radiohead for what they've done here. Hey, it's alright not to tour; hell, that very idea doubled R.E.M.'s sales when they stopped the road circus without compromising their artistry. But R.E.M. gave the radio "Losing My Religion" when they grounded the tour bus for the first time, one of the catchiest, most emotional songs of the entire last decade. Whereas Radiohead shunned the very idea of a song, let alone a single, and that cost them bigtime. They were primed to explode, and though they doubled my respect for them (hey, if they don't want to be stars, that's damn refreshing!), they lost the chance to help lead pop out its sad, lethargic devastation. They could have done so much more if they had made a "Low," a "Heroes," or a "Loveless" instead of a willfully incoherent ambient/techno/electronica mishmash. So close! And rather good. But short of the ultimate mark.

In the end the most significant event of 2000 for me had nothing to do with pop itself, and everything to do with its distribution and dissemination. For all the industry bellyaching and Chicken Little routines about Napster, the sky didn't exactly fall on CD sales in 2000, now did it? No, in fact, they were up industry-wide by nearly seven percent - a rather tidy increase when so many other industries such as

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computer sales flattened so considerably, and investors in so many e-businesses ended up feeling like they must have been on E. to have funded such pie in the sky.

As far as I can see, Napster was a great way to get kids to sample other cuts from LPs beyond the big hit single on the radio that caught their initial interest. This likely led some to forego buying LPs they might have otherwise bought, either satisfied with their computer download, or just as likely, unhappy with the quotient of filler the rest of the LP held! But it seems as if far more folks used those downloads as an incentive to actually buy CDs that they otherwise wouldn't have purchased, having that greater exposure. That seven percent growth doesn't lie. Remember, home taping didn't "kill the music industry," it aided and abetted it by distributing more music into potential consumers' hands! Record companies have the shortest memories, that's for sure!

How come the music biz still hasn't figured out that the real threat to their growth is not home taping or home downloading? The real danger comes from DVDs, Playstation 2, 250 Channel satellite TV, web sites and chat rooms, and all the other expanding home entertainments. In the face of so much competition for the home entertainment buck, anything that actually gets people to listen to music is bound to make them buy more of it, not less. Honestly, all this bullshit reminds me of British artists' managers fears 35 years ago, that having their artists' recorded songs played on the BBC British National Radio would lead to diminished demands for their live services! (Thus the advent of the now famous "BBC session," which was conceived as a compensation for this "injury!")

And make no mistake, it was all the biggest major label artists that made all the money in 2000. Six years after Epitaph moved nearly 10 million of the Offspring, there is now little hint of any shakeup to the biz that was affected in its wake. It's still all Sony, Uni, EMI, BMG, and WEA. They still control everything. All this baloney I heard in 1995 about how the internet would even the playing field and flatten it, giving more left field artists on smaller labels a more even chance (like the way it's always been in smaller England) was just a bunch of hooley! I suppose the internet has so far helped some small artists to sell more than they would have, or to continue a career after getting the usual disinterested boot from the big boys. But rock and pop fans don't buy anything in any mass quantity that isn't promoted heavily on the radio and TV, same as ever, and all that money comes from the majors. You want to talk campaign finance reform, when will we have media-financing reform? Will our media ever be forced to recognize artists whose wheels aren't so heavily greased, as they do in more civilized places like Canada?

And though it's been less of a story, the BMG deal with Napster really heralds much bigger changes in store for the industry, and for pop itself. As I posited in this space once before, I believe that soon all the music we hear will be distributed via internet (again, I grow more convinced with every year that the CD/record store is an endangered species that will be extinct by the end of this decade or soon thereafter). Thus, the record companies are slowly coming to realize that instead of putting Napster out of business, what they really, desperately, need to do is to find a way to make money from its exponential spread. Right now, they're just trying with supreme haste to find that golden key to capturing all that potential fees-for-downloads revenue and securing the music spread in tandem with that required revenue stream. Music won't be for free as it has been this past year, if the major labels can find the key that unlocks Pandora's box. (So far they haven't been able to, but it's probably a fait accompli.)

And I can already feel the pre-tremors. The saddest moment for me

in music 2000 was the email I received from that very same nephew in December, replying to my annual inquiry asking him what CD he might want for a holiday gift. To my great dismay, he told me that he no longer buys them. While many of my friends closer to my own age had been burning their own CDs all year, making mixed tapes, and committing much of their never-on-CD record collections to digital, this was the first I had heard anyone say that they had given up buying CDs altogether in favor of their own burns.

It may be, thus, that the LP as we have known it is dead. Said my nephew in his email, "I don't really need CDs anymore because I finally got a new computer and that means that I can download music off the internet and burn my own CDs. I already burned about three with only the songs I like. It's great. I can play them in the CD player that I bought for my car."

My mind flashed to all the albums I bought where I initially only liked a few songs. And then later, through repeated plays, I came to realize that I had underappreciated the more obtuse charms of the other songs that could only be revealed with greater familiarity. Songs I initially dismissed became my biggest favorites, and the LP itself became more of an obsession. Furthermore, the pure pleasure of an album as a whole, not just a collection of tunes, but a statement as a whole, greater than the mere sum of its parts, is what makes such albums such a pleasure to me. It's a gratification we may well be on the verge of discarding, and I hate that thought.

Of course, LPs take more effort and concerted listening for this greater payoff than mere singles. But the reward has always been such a strong one. So I'd never considered that the LP format, a mere 50-years old (yes, only since about 1950!), might be so endangered. I might be jumping the gun, but if a nation of people no longer have the patience for entire LPs, for all their ups and downs and good and bad that serve a larger artistic conception, of lesser songs that turn out to be not so lesser flavors after all, then it really is a loss. If the coming digital generation only picks and chooses songs that have the most immediate appeal off the internet, as my nephew is already doing, we may well end up with a musical culture even more stagnant and overly instant than the one we suffer under currently. And the industry will still make the money, selling these downloads. But in terms of songs and their distribution, we could well go back to the days like the '20s and '30s, pre-LP, when artists did sessions for the sole purpose of releasing them one or two at a time (on those bulky, thick old 78s).

While that would release us from the tyranny of LP filler - which itself became more prevalent with the advent of CDs and their hour-long LPs! - it would also destroy the most vital musical achievements any of us have ever seen. The LP has been the holy grail of every serious music fan I have ever known. We've searched for every one of great consequence, as I have for nearly all my adult life while sharing my discoveries. I would hate to see this delectation lost in a flood of mere compilation CDs of hits or compiled computer files of hits, even of artists themselves. It wouldn't kill music, but it would sure dim its artistic possibilities on a larger scale. Full albums just encourage listeners to sample a greater repertoire of what an artist can offer.

We'll see. As a final note, I think music of late has been much like the stock market until recently: Overvalued but producing too much monetary wealth for anyone to bother to take a real critical look at the whole flimsy house of cards. Already, all the industry mergers and consolidations prove to me that the majors are contracting, much like the market, and throwing their considerable weight behind less and less acts, funding only the proven sellers and those that operate (smell) just like them. The brief days after Nirvana, when everyone foretold a new market with new blood and new ideas, ended just as abruptly and just as unceremoniously as I predicted it would in 1994. Now everyone has rushed back to the stodgy old payoffs in the "value" sector. (I.e. facile pop, electropop, and metal, same as the late '80s!)

The problem with that is that stocks might have been overvalued,

but the technological expansion is what put so many people to work and stimulated the economy to such unchecked growth for so long. If all we are is General Motors (itself a technology stock, once upon a time!), instead of computers, we lose that growth.

Likewise, the music business is shooting itself in the foot by failing to support anything remotely new and unusual. They should be signing more unique and challenging artists like Moby, who won't sell six million in one year like some preening boy band, but will sell 5000-20,000 a week, month after month, and actually give people something lasting to inspire them - something they might even be able to sell in 30 years, after the artist has long left the public stage, as much as they sell now. I was not blown away by Moby's LP, but like the Flaming Lips last year, at least it strains with something new and unique, not something old and tired, tired, tired!

There are no new Beatles in the class of 2000 to sell five million of in the year 2031. Not even any Nirvanas or R.E.M.s. And that's the industry's fault. They don't sign them and develop them anymore. (Even Moby was an accident, as reports of the difficulty he had getting signed demonstrate.) Labels and the media that give us their product turned scared on us like a former technology investor, and they've holed themselves into a protective, conservative shell. It's all going to kill them in the long run...

A BRIEFER PART TWO: THE UNDERGROUND; MORE SAME OLD SAME OLD

I have much less to say about the underground this year, but I have one big point to make. I've been hearing a lot of blather about how the underground/indie scene grew complacent under eight years of Democratic rule, and now that Bush has been handed the job by the Supreme Court of Republican appointees, protest music will now suddenly be revived and indie rock and pop will somehow be recharged! Hooray, hurrah!

In a word, bullshit.

That's one of those statements that sounds good and sensible when one hears it, but collapses instantly when the slightest knowledge of history is even remotely applied! Let's get one thing straight. If 1977-1980 were the years that punk first caught on in America, beyond New York, as hundreds of amazing bands formed and released records that are now worth hundreds of dollars apiece, then who was president? Jimmy Carter, that's who. Somehow, commentators decided that Ronald Reagan's regime of 1981-1989 was the catalyst for the U.S. indie/underground scene, when anyone who knows anything knows full well that it was the legacy left by the Carter-era bands and fledgling labels. It was these folks, starting indie labels like SST (founded 1979 under Carter) and Dischord (founded 1980 under Carter) and putting out uncompromising, uncommercial music, bypassing the major labels, that were responsible, not any Reagan policies! (Bad as they were.) For chrissakes!

Sure, '80s punk kids didn't like Reagan and threw his name into far too many songs to show their lack of critical faculties and imagination, as if one man alone was oppressing them. But the punks that preceded them were equally disdainful of government or society's controlling mores. Had Carter beaten Reagan and stayed in office from '81-'85, there is no reason to think the underground, having begun with such a fantastic late-'70s big bang, wouldn't have continued unabated until it was swallowed whole by the major label whale and subsequently neutered in the wake of "Nevermind" in 1991.

It was the same in England. As Howard Devoto of the original 1976 Buzzcocks pointed out in the new *Big Takeover*, shortsighted commentators now try to sell the fiction that punk in England began as a

reaction to Margaret Thatcher, when in fact, it reared its fiery head during a Labour Government! At best, you could say that bad economic conditions, and unenlightened social policy breed more dissent than conservative yahoo premiers, but you can't ascribe that to any party or any president. The height of social protest music in the 1960s came during Johnson's administration. And whose convention in 1968 suffered so much from that era's youth-culture protest, the ruling Democrats in Chicago, or the Republicans? Last I checked, the MC5 were trying to wreck Humphrey's party, not Nixon's. They were the ones behind the Vietnam War at the time, after all. Nowadays, you'd think the evil Richard Nixon started the war (though he certainly took his sweet time ending it).

If the independent-based grassroots music scene returns in any way to its heyday of the late '70s and '80s, it will be because the music scene is so stagnant now, as a reaction against that, not to a change of power in Washington - much as the original '70s punk explosion was such a reaction against the stagnant commercial rock and pop scene of the mid 1970s, not Jimmy Carter!

Why must rock writers and social commentators spew this ridiculous claptrap year after year? It would be nice if the majority of young musicians were so politically savvy, but especially in America, most musicians are inspired by developments in music, not by presidential press conferences. The time is ripe for something big to happen, but no one knows how to find the future in music. The problem isn't lack of energy or dissent. For instance, those old touchstones like the Ramones are constantly replicated in newer groups such as the Donnas or Huntingtons, but it's something new that's required. Aping the Ramones in 2000 is like aping Eddie Cochran or Gene Vincent in 1980. I.e., it was good fun to have seen Levi & the Rockats back in 1980 do just that, reviving old Eddie and Gene Vincent. But then as now, it's not going to get us to something exciting from our own time. I was more into the Bad Brains in 1980.

And that's the problem with the underground now, one that the arrival of an inept Republican moron unable to form a coherent sentence is not going to magically solve for us all. Far away from the radio and TV, where the better music was made in 2000 as ever, the growing coterie of folks with guitars tried desperately to replicate the enduring, ever inspiring greatness of too-old heroes seemingly rediscovered by new young musicians every year ('60s gods such as Wilson, Townshend, Davies, Lennon/McCartney/Harrison and Drake, along with all the old '70s/'80s punks and post-punks). You've got to applaud all the 20-somethings having their worlds rocked yet again by the level of greatness found in the best recordings of 18-36 years ago. But they need to do something of their own with it, to rock future generations with their own greatness.

And so, one strains along with young artists to find that romance of the perfect pop moment, or the freedom of that great, cathartic garage-rock stormer with balls, attitude, and dexterity, or the post-punk brains of deconstructed punk put back together in new combinations. But the vast majority of today's indie artists fell well short of the lofty heights of their knockout heroes.

Where at least 1999 gave us the unique if inconsistent vision of Flaming Lips' penultimate "The Soft Bulletin," and Liz Fraser cooing over Massive Attack's shattering warmth, again, only Moby seemed to provide any spark most could agree on in 2000. And that spark lasted more in the marketplace, where it sold slowly and steadily, than in the rehearsal rooms of new musicians trying to channel some new energy, which is ultimately what I'm looking for most.

In fact, of the two reasons why this past year provided a good deal more pleasure than its predecessor, the first is an arbitrary, temporal one: A lot of the best veterans that sat out 1999 in their two-year

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tour/write/record cycles were due in 2000. Artists such as Radiohead, Catherine Wheel, and Bad Religion all released fine efforts, full of their usual inspiration. But none achieved creative pinnacles, as the latter two stayed close to past works or merely made really good LPs, and, contrarily, Radiohead made too much of a quantum leap, to the point where we could barely recognize them. Likewise, Leatherface made a brilliant, impassioned return, and just in time too: "Horsebox" was only the second of their six LPs to enjoy release here, and the first since the incomparable "Mush" eight years prior. Again, that's all good, but it's new blood and new movements that are needed to truly turn the tide.

The second reason 2000 was better was because England recovered its own underground. After the flatulence of Britpop during the last five years - a glut of bands so pregnant with the weight of their own importance, that the worst lo-fi U.S. indie rock felt like a breath of fresh air - that scene has largely collapsed and British musicians are getting back to making music for its own sake rather than trying to storm the charts with the latest huge, bloated statement. Radiohead and their imitators Travis remain hugely popular, but that was the more tolerable side, anyway. It's in the indie labels that things have been improving. My Top 50 this year is filled with fresh young U.K. talent - led by two newcomers at that, the Doves and the EMI-distributed Idlewild, as well as the ever-evolving Supergrass. Fabulous stuff for sure.

All these folks were well supported by the British press, too, which otherwise turned a blind eye to most of the rest of what was happening outside their snooty noses: being only into hip new flavors, the U.K. music

writers no longer have time for artists that originally enjoyed their support more than a decade ago, such as Mojave 3, Leatherface, Catherine Wheel, Moose, and New Model Army. The papers have also gradually grown lukewarm on Gene, Belle & Sebastian, and Teenage Fan Club, for the same crime of longevity without Top 40 sales. And they've barely noticed Foil, the Drum, and Bevis Frond, who were doing fine work under their radar. But clearly, Britain seems back, producing a great variety of inspired sounds, and new artists are coming.

So the problem is our own. We've completely turned our back on Britain in this country. It's partly Britain's fault for dumping all those pompous acts on us the last few years, but it's still sad to watch when there is still so much vibrant talent over there. Idlewild's new LP will finally be released here on Capitol, in March (probably in the wake of *Spin* giving the LP a "9" last month, though they otherwise never review imports!!) but a year late and with little push. Likewise the Doves cleaned up over there, but were relegated to the strange choice of Astralwerks, a more electronic based label, here. And "Lost Souls" was released here way late, too. So many other bands have lost their old major label deals here, like Swervedriver, Gene, Teenage Fan Club, New Model Army (and lesser groups that do well over there, such as Dodgy, Bluetones, and Embrace), it's becoming harder and harder for those bands to come over here to play for us. Others, like Moose, have headed for such little indies here that they still don't come over. And it doesn't seem like U.S. majors will be inking many U.K. acts any time

soon, as they've all vanished from the Top 40 LP charts they once so easily penetrated, save for U2. In the top sellers of 2000, the only other British act to sell at all was Sting! Yikes. I'm not saying we need to bring back schlock like Kajagoogoo, or that British music in our charts is by itself a good thing. I'm just saying it's amazing how inconsequential the entire British Isles have suddenly been rendered in music!

And outside of the finally recognized Go-Betweens, Aussie acts such as You Am I and the amazing Glide also couldn't get their LPs out here anymore, let alone Died Pretty. Sad, that. It feels quixotic to even pay attention to all the good things that go on there, when no one else in that damn country can be bothered anymore. I pine for the days when we used to get bands like Hoodoo Gurus and Celibate Rifles signing deals here and coming over, and indie fans took note of them. Ditto for the forgotten paradise of New Zealand. What, did a volcano erupt over there and wipe that place out, and no one told me? It might as well have.

So what about the U.S. underground? Nothing much happening there, either. Lots of good bands and artists, still, to keep one interested, and we found dozens of them as ever. Both Robert Pollard and Tobin Sprout released excellent solo LPs that were great improvements over recent efforts. Joe Pernice stepped forward as the most literate and gifted pop songwriter we've produced in eons. Likewise, old Nils' frontman and superb composer/singer Carlos Soria made a welcome, and long delayed, return with his new powerhouse, Chino. Jeff

Pezzati of Naked Raygun also came back with his new band the Bomb. Idaho, Elliott Smith, and Bad Religion are always welcome, they always deliver. It's good to see the Black Watch still going strong, too, even after 15 years of being totally, unfairly ignored. No Sebadoh or Bob Mould this year, perhaps, but plenty of great music. Just very few surprises and no lifetime achievements like the Lips last year, flawed as that was.

I'm sure something is going to happen soon, but what? Alt-country was fun, but it's a dead end, as is any revival, ultimately. Electronica has already faded, as I knew it would. There's 5000 punk rock bands still, and my heart always goes out to them as kindred spirits, but too few with a fresh take on the wonderful old war horse. Just like last time, all the good records I heard by artists I already favored can get me through any year, and there's always a few new acts that at least get my attention. But like Billy Bragg, I'm still waiting for the great leap forward.

Instead, like Bragg and his obsession with Woody Guthrie's words (when he himself has always written lyrics that are just as good), I did my usual great leap backward. I spent at least 50 percent of my time in 2000 listening to the veritable flood of old reissues and archive finds that came in my door again. Frankly, it's hard to put on some heard-it-a-million-times indie record again when I could be listening to Louis Armstrong light up a Chicago night. Howard Devoto snarl his way through a 1976 Manchester recording studio backed by Pete Shelley, Steve Diggle (on bass!), and a 16-year-old John Maher, or Johnny Cash singing songs of sin and redemption to the most hardened convicts 32 years ago, and making them and us laugh and cheer. Likewise, I loved the old Pretty Things psychedelia under the secret name Electric Banana, and Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys finally giving up their last genuine works of inspiration before they lost it forever, "Sunflower" and "Surf's Up," for CD. And who gets tired of Elmore James, Jimmy Reed, Bob Marley, Duke Ellington, the Mills Brothers,

The second reason 2000 was better was because England recovered its own underground.

and Solomon Burke? It's like getting tired of pizza and beer/soda. It's never going to be my sole diet, but it's always going to be there when I want it, and it always marvels.

Because of the endless reissues, and the stubborn gifts of today's best veteran artists, and the infusion of a few new bright lights, I remain a rabid music fan. But to borrow the title of one of the other hot reissues of 2000, D.O.A.'s long deleted first LP, "Something Better Change." Let it be soon. +

JACK RABID'S TOP PICS of 2000:

LPs (Newly released material):

1. Idlewild-100 Broken Windows (Food/EMI U.K.)
2. The Doves-Lost Souls (Astralwerks)
3. Chappaquiddick Skyline (i.e. Joe Pernice)-Chappaquiddick Skyline (Sub Pop)/Big Tobacco (i.e. Joe Pernice)-Big Tobacco (Glitterhouse Germany)
4. Leatherface-Horsebox (BYO)
5. Supergrass-Supergrass (Island Def Jam/UNI)
6. Catherine Wheel-Wishville (Columbia/Sony), import double LP with live CD version (Chrysalis U.K.)
7. Robert Pollard & Doug Gillard-Speak Kindly of Your Volunteer Fire Department (Rockathon/Luna)
8. Bad Religion-The New America (Atlantic/WEA)
9. Chino-Mala Leche mini-LP (Magwheel Canada)
10. Mojave 3-Excuses For Travelers (4AD)

Honorable Mentions:

11. Moose-High Ball Me (Le Grand Magistery/Saltwater)
11. Whipping Boy-Whipping Boy (Low Rent U.K.)
12. Glide-Last (self-released AUS)
13. New Model Army-Eight (Attack Attack/Zomba U.K.)
14. Supergrass-Supergrass (Island Def Jam/Uni)
15. Idaho-Hearts of Palm (Idaho)
16. Teenage Fan Club-Howdy (Columbia/Sony U.K.)
17. House of Love-The John Peel Sessions 1988-1989 (BBC/Strange Fruit/Pinnacle U.K.)
18. Buzzcocks-Beating Hearts/Small Songs With Big Hearts (live 78/79) (Burning Airlines U.K.)
19. The Who-BBC Sessions (BBC/MCA/Uni)
20. Eyesinweasel (Tobin Sprout)-Wrinkled Thoughts (Luna)
21. David Bowie-Bowie at the Beeb triple CD (BBC/Virgin/EMI)
22. Elliott Smith-Figure 8 (Dreamworks/Uni)
23. The Drum (formerly China Drum)-Diskin (Mantra U.K.)
24. Small Faces-BBC Sessions (Strange Fruit/Fuel 2000/Uni)
25. Gene-Rising For Sunset (live) (Contra/Worldwidetribes)
26. Radiohead-Kid A (Capitol/EMI)
27. The Black Watch-Lime Green Girl (Saltwater)
28. Magazine-Maybe It's Right to be Nervous Now box set (Virgin U.K.)
29. The Chameleons-Strip (Paradiso U.K.)
30. Belle & Sebastian-Fold Your Hands Child, You Walk Like a Peasant (Matador)
31. Electronic-Twisted Tenderness (Clear/Koch)
32. Go-Betweens-The Friends of Rachel Worth (Jetset)
33. Iggy and the Stooges-Michigan Palace 10/6/73 (Bomp!)
34. Dandy Warhols-Thirteen Tales From Urban Bohemia (Capitol/EMI)
35. All-Problematic (Epitaph)
36. Paul Revere & the Raiders-Mojo Workout! live double CD (Sundazed)
37. Various-Sing a Song For You; a Tribute to Tim Buckley (double CD) (Manifesto)
38. Foil-Never Got Hip (Mute)
39. Sunny Day Real Estate-The Rising Tide (Time Bomb/BMG)
40. Johnny Thunders-In the Flesh live (Amsterdamned)
41. You Am I-Undress Me Slow (RCA AUS), Saturday Night 'Round Ten (live) (BMG AUS)
42. Patti Smith-Gung Ho (Arista/BMG)
43. The Bevis Frond-Valedictory Songs (Rubric)
44. Toshack Highway-Toshack Highway (Catapult/Fort Point)
45. Jupiter Affect-Instructions For the Two Ways of Becoming Alice (Eggbert)
46. Little Red Rocket-It's in the Sound (Monolith)
47. Trembling Blue Stars-Broken By Whispers (Sub Pop)
48. Grant Hart-Good News For Modern Man (Pachyderm)
49. Paul McCartney-Run Devil Run (Capitol/EMI)
50. Dinosaur Jr.-BBC in Session (BBC Fuel 2000/UNI)
51. New York Dolls-A Hard Night's Day (Norton)
52. Elastic-The Menace (Atlantic/WEA)
53. Posies-Alive Before the Iceberg (live) (Houston Party/Badman), In Case You Didn't Feel Like Plugging In unplugged (Casa)
54. The Zeros-Right Now! (Bomp)
55. Various-Shadows Breaking Over Our Heads; A Tribute to the Left Banke (Apollo/Brobdinagian)
56. Hot Snakes-Automatic Midnight (Swami)
57. The Bomb-Torch Songs (Jettison) (Jeff Pezzati ex-Naked Raygun)
58. Oasis-Standing on the Shoulder of Giants (Epic/Sony)
59. Bryan MacLean-Candy's Waltz (Sundazed) (ex-Love)
60. Gram Parsons-Another Side of This Life (Sundazed)

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Reissues:

1. Buzzcocks-Time's Up (Mute), Spiral Scratch EP (orig. '76 lineup w. Howard Devoto)
2. Electric Banana (The Pretty Things)-Blows Your Mind (Carnabeat U.K.)
3. Johnny Cash-At Folsom Prison (live, reissue), Love God Murder box set (Columbia/Legacy/Sony)
4. Louis Armstrong-The Complete Hot Five & Seven Recordings, Satch Plays Fats, Satchmo the Great, Ambassador Satch, Love Songs (all Columbia/Legacy/Sony), Sings Back Through the Years (MCA/Decca/UNI), and (with Duke Ellington) The Great Summit/Complete Sessions (Roulette Jazz/Blue Note)
5. Beach Boys-Sunflower/Surf's Up (Brother/Capitol/EMI)

Honorable Mentions:

6. Saints-Wild About You; 1976-1978 Complete Studio Recordings (double CD) (Raven AUS)
7. D.O.A.-Something Better Change (Sudden Death CAN)
8. The Damned-Sessions of the Damned (BBC/Fuel 2000/UNI), The Pleasure and the Pain; Selected Highlights 1982-1991 (Castle U.K.)
9. The Beatles-1 (Capitol/EMI)
10. Jimmy Cliff-Ultimate Collection (Hip-O/UNI)
11. Comsat Angels-From Beyond 2: A Compilation 1987-1995 (Cherry Red U.K.)
12. Dementia 2000!; Dr. Demento's 30th Anniversary Collection (Rhino)
13. Chords-So Far Away (Captain Mod)
14. The Controllers-The Controllers (Bacchus/Dionysus)
15. Government Issue-Complete History Volume 1 (Dr. Strange)
16. Tammy Wynette-Stand By Your Man (Epic/Sony)
17. Spinal Tap-Spinal Tap (Polydor/UNI)
18. Glen Campbell-20 Greatest Hits (Capitol Nashville)
19. The Move-Something Else From the Move-Plus! (Edsel U.K.)
20. The Temptations-Psychedelic Soul (Spectrum)
21. Nick Drake-Five Leaves Left, Bryter Lyster, Pink Moon (Hannibal/Rykodisc)
22. Zero Boys-Vicious Circle (Panic Button)
23. Various-Ken Burns Jazz box set (Columbia/Legacy/Sony)
24. Jimmy Reed-Blues Masters: The Very Best of (Rhino)
25. Billy Bragg-Reaching to the Converted (Rhino)
26. The MC5-Big Bang; the Best of (Rhino/Atlantic/WEA)
27. The Dils-Class War (live) (Bacchus/Dionysus)
28. Duke Ellington-The Duke; The Essential Collection 1927-1962 box set (Columbia/Legacy/Sony)
29. Bob Marley-Songs of Freedom box set (Tuff Gong/Island/Def Jam/UNI)
30. Paul Revere and the Raiders-Midnight Ride, Goin' to Memphis, Hard 'n' Heavy, Alias Pink Putz (Sony Special Projects/Sundazed) Greatest Hits (Columbia/Legacy/Sony)
31. Mills Brothers-20th Century Masters; The Best of (MCA/UNI)
32. Simon & Garfunkel-The Best of (Columbia/Legacy/Sony)
33. The Divine Comedy-A Secret History; Best of (Setanta/Red Ink)
34. Marvin Gaye-Lost and Found; Love Starved Heart (Motown/UNI)
35. Posies-Dream All Day; the Best of (Geffen/UNI)
36. Graham Nash and David Crosby-Wind on the Water (MCI/UNI)
37. Rich Kids-Burning Sounds! (Rev-ola U.K.)
38. Bo Diddley-The Millennium Collection (MCA/UNI)
39. The Animals-Animalisms (Repertoire U.K.)
40. Tony Bennett-The Ultimate Tony Bennett (RPM/Columbia/Legacy/Sony)
41. Solomon Burke-Proud Mary (Sundazed)
42. Various-Northwest Battle of the Bands Vol. II (Sundazed)
43. Various-The Essential Pebbles Collection, Vol. III (Bomp!)
44. Petula Clark-Anthology; Downtown to Sunset Blvd. double CD (Hip-O/UNI)
45. The Ruts-In a Can (Harry May U.K.)
46. New York Dolls-Lipstick Killers (ROIR)
47. Margo Guryan-Irka a Picture (Franklin Castle/Oglia)
48. Cinerama-This is Cinerama (SpinART)
49. Devo-Pioneers Who Got Sculpted; The Anthology double CD (Warner Archives/Rhino)
50. Various-Yule B' Swingin' Too! (Hip-O/UNI)

Singles

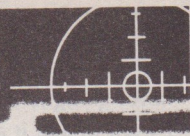
1. Pernice Brothers-"Number Two" (E.P.) (Ashmont)
2. Idlewild-"These Wooden Ideas" (Food/EMI U.K.)
3. Death Cab For Cutie-"Photobooth" (Forbidden Love EP) (Barsuk)
4. Scenic-"The Spheres" (Spheres EP) (Independent Project)
5. Trash Can Sinatras-"Snow" (Sony Japan)

Honorable Mentions

6. The Doves-"Catch The Sun" (Heavenly U.K.)
7. Mojave 3-"Any Day Will be Fine" (4AD U.K.)
8. Bad Religion-"New America" (Sony Germany)
9. The Drum (formerly China Drum)-"Reasons" (Mantra U.K.)
10. Last Burning Embers-"Distress Call" (Reg Dunlap) OK, so I voted for my own band...

To check out Jack's magazine 20-year-old magazine, The Big Takeover, have a look at the web site at www.bigtakeover.com. Sample issues are only \$5 and subscriptions are only \$20 for four issues.)

HIT SQUAD



“As long as I remember, I’ve been on the outside. Same as all my friends. Straights don’t dig us. When asked why, those dumb cunts can’t answer. We give them the creeps. There’s something about us they can’t put their white fingers on. We don’t say much but they know we despise them, their crummy world and all it stands for. Sitting there dumb, beneath their satellites, buying it all.” (from “Crucify Me Again” by Mark Manning.)

“ROCK N ROLL IS CRUEL...” (Marc Bolan)

I always scoff when subjected to those VH1 documentaries that invariably portray Blondie and the Talking Heads as the absolute vanguard of American punk, briefly mentioning the Ramones and Television, maybe the ‘Dolls, and dismissing the

MIDDLEAGE WASTELAND



Dead Boys altogether. When I hear the phrase “punk rock”, academic dorks in big white suits and “funky” world-beat, art school-nerds are not what immediately comes to my mind. Wasn’t it a beleaguered, white trash Stiv Bators and his surly band of pasty, Midwestern outcasts who first got the NYC tabloid press and the Max’s Kansas City/Studio 54 jet-set interested in that scroungey little Bowery dive, CBGB’s, with their cartoon-violent razor-slashing self-destruction, onstage-hangings, Sid Vicious-bottlings, deviant sexual hijinks, and bare-bones All-American punk rock fire?

In rock’n’roll, the winner\$ write the history — just look at this yuppie R’n’R Hall of Fame farce. Aerosmith and the Great Johnny Johnson got inducted the other night alongside all the other bands who absolutely epitomize the defiant, wild spirit of raunchy rock’n’roll...you know, James Taylor, Paul Simon, and Billy Joel! I remember when me and Cheetah Chrome, Deadboys Guitar Monster and the living embodiment of rock’n’roll’s pure, wild, untamed spirit, were denied entry into the Limelight nightclub in NYC one night, for maybe looking a little, well...dirty; we just seemed unsavoury to the doorman wearing his —

get this — obligatory CBGB’s t-shirt! He had no idea who the always-gracious and statesman-like Cheetah was...only one of the premiere architects of American Punk, who helped put Hilly’s stinky bar on the map!...but the meathead at the door was visibly impressed with the D-Generation celebuntante crowd, all decked-out in their imported Trash And Vaudeville finery.

“YOU’RE GROWING UP ON DOGFOOD IN THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY...” (Flesh For Lulu)

The Talking Heads did have at least one song I liked, though it was about places like Cincinnati, “fly-over country” in city-slicker parlance. It went, “I wouldn’t live there if you paid me/No, I wouldn’t live there if you paid me to.” Sadly, not only am I indefinitely stationed here, but I can’t even find a way to get paid for it. I’m only good at a small number of things and I’m prohibited by the small and wingless locals from practicing any of those things professionally, or even semi-professionally, here. Black-listed. Exile on Vine Street. Which doesn’t hurt me much at this point, since I’m thick-skinned: “We’ve been outcasts our whole lives”...right? But it affects my relationships and adversely impacts my companion’s and my children’s overall quality of life. I’ve always prided myself on being able to change a speck into a spectacle, but there is literally no adult in this town I’d have coffee with at this point. Especially not the cats who dress like me! Evil lives in Cincinnati. Don’t come to Cincinnati. All the stories you’ve heard about free-thinking mavericks and trail-blazing libertines being targeted and harassed here for their threatening art or progressive ideologies or profane lifestyles are true. The natives always brag about how it’s a great place to raise children, and maybe it is — if you’re a Great Grey Proctor & Gamble or Chiquita Banana exec on your fourth trophy wife who owns businesses and votes Republican. Or one of their even more despicable but fortunate underachieving sons, who after graduation from some prestigious college choose to move back here and use their family fortunes to perpetuate some lame-ass big fish in the small pond hipster fantasy. I think part of the rub is that the upper middle class Cincinnati punktypes work at banks, whereas some of my pals, um, rob banks.

If you’re a father of three, you can’t pursue a life of crime, but there

is less than zero opportunity for a seditious starlet like yours crudely here. I’m subject to the bourgeois condemnations of the same old tiresome über-in-crowd, who project all this nonstop torment, drama and speculation onto all us lone wolves who aren’t interested in subscribing to their high school cafeteria pecking-orders. If I’m gonna be the subject of all these peculiar fantasies every time I set foot outside my

In rock’n’roll, the winner\$ write the history — just look at this yuppie R’n’R Hall of Fame farce.

home, you’d think I’d be savvy enough to have found a way by now to parlay this “gift” for attracting unnecessary attention into a livelihood of some sort. The dirty secret is that I’m really just not deserving of the attention — I’m not all that interesting anymore. I watch the “Crocodile Hunter” and “Ballykiss Angel”, and VH1’s “Behind the Music” while doing a lot of diaper-changing, as well as web surfin’.

reading stories to babies, hangin' out with my children, and carryin' 'em 'round in circles. A couple times a day I may smoke cigarettes on the back porch and mutter obscenities to myself, but that's about it. So how uninteresting must these ruling-class dullards' lives be to put all of this energy into constantly editorializing about how I behave, what I do, who I do it with, etc., etc. I strongly suspect that it's primarily a diversionary tactic. Laying all these jealous trips and gossip and controversy on me and my former drinking-understudies is a way of drawing attention away from the fact that their own collective mediocrity and relentless bandwagon-chasing is of little interest to anyone, even to their own wrinkling barfly entourage.

Even so, as a result of all this miscasting, for years the local record stores, coffee houses, rock bars, and boutiques who'll seemingly hire any random heroin drifter here have consistently spurned my multiple applications seeking employment (in positions which are in fact far beneath my qualifications) so that I can support my little lights. And I refuse to settle for some jive-ass, small-town, tawdry approximation of big city nightlife. I dream about the day when I can leave this stinkin' city, and hope that someday all the songs I've written about the oppression I've experienced here might see some meager returns, thus transforming shame and degradation into hopefully-uplifting song. But with the growing glut of middle-aged story-tellin' yuppie folksingers and glitter-punk pretenders to "the throne", with their impressive skin-art and wardrobe budgets playin' dress-up at the end of the world, even my faintest hopes of Last Minute Rock'n'roll Redemption grow dimmer everytime I go online. And when, on rare occasions, I can afford to buy a magazine, I discover that ten more young, trashy glam bands are emerging, trading on "chic"-junkie poses and my own well-worn, leopard-printed, feather boa'd, vomit-wet, mascara smear — only, it's all new and store-bought. Mass-produced and half-hearted.

DIMITRIMONROE

Self-Destruction Blues bought off the rack. Middle-Class children of privilege adapting the trailer-park-chic aesthetic as a hip, ironic pose. Yuppies in wife-beaters and bowling shirts. And well-meaning fanboy label-owners with straight jobs always fall for this shtick, backing fresh-faced suburbanite hard-ons and hair-don'ts, who just discovered their whole "lifestyle" ten minutes before on Mom's credit card, while the originators, lifers, and genuine articles go unrecorded and unappreciated. Ain't that always been the way, though, since the days of Pat Boone and Little Richard? It's a bitch ride, soldier. March Or Die. "We're desperate/Get Used To It." (X)

"PHONEY ROCK'N'ROLL IS A CRIME..." (Iggy Pop)

FINALLY, somebody's decided to put something out by the stellar COMA-TONES! People don't want the real thing in this culture no more, which is invariably flawed, ragged, and prone to sloppy acts of reckless, scars-laid-bare emotionalism, when they can simply hire non-threatening, tattooed mannequins with washboard abs... "America's Only Rock'n'roll Band", the mighty TRASH BRATS, have an instant classic on their new LP, "American Disaster" (soon to be available on picture-disc), called "Imitation Generation", that succinctly describes how this whole country's turned into a goddamn stripmall where all the young punks steal their bandnames from Stooges lyrics and buy their glam rock decadence at the Gap. An original thought just scares the piss out of everybody — in this era, you're either in or you're out. I've seen the best minds of my generation either get bought off by the corporate dot com/advertising world, or become

WARS FREERIXSEN



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HIT SQUAD

so utterly marginalized that you'll never hear from them — unless you find yourself traveling that broken highway where the desperate hopefuls, drunkard pariahs, and rabble-rousing undesirables are banished. Where are all the Real Rock'n'Roll People? If you're not part of the resistance, you're part of the problem. Which is why I have no clue as to why all my West Coast intellectual punk acquaintances have these irrational beefs with freedom fighters like Ralph Nader or Jello Biafra or Noam Chomsky or Howard Zinn or Michael Moore. From my vantage point, I just gotta be grateful that anybody out there is paying attention, trying to make things better, or get to the real truth. The local news is all highschool sports and dog stories with a pro-corporate spin. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* had this scandal with Chiquita Bananas a year or two ago, when some reporters uncovered all these worker's rights and human rights violations and environmental crimes. But it was the reporters who were prosecuted vigorously by the corrupt local establishment for unearthing some of their facts "unscrupulously", i.e., by illegally accessing the emails of Chiquita's execs. To stay out of jail these poor reporters and their editors had to sign agreements swearing to never discuss the case again, and the *Enquirer* bigwigs gave millions to Chiquita as an apology and deleted or revised the whole story until it was as if it had never happened. Nobody seems to think that this is frightening.

GET TO THE HIP NOW, BABE, BEFORE THE HIP GET TO YOU... (the Cult)

My brother and longtime Partner-In-Crime, debauched Sexgod Ken McIntyre, "the Sleazegrinder", had one of his typically brilliant treatments for a big-budgeted motion picture ten or eleven years back, a vividly-drawn character study of the bygone 80's hair-band era to be called "Heavy Metal Parking Lot", right? Well, while me and him were pitching that, along with our shock-rock TV show "Back To Weird City", our buddy-flick "Lesbian Summer", and a host of other high-octane concepts to every money-havin' media-mercenary we came in contact with during our cross-country misadventures over the course of this blurry decade, in a characteristically vain and desperate appeal to obtain the necessary venture capital, it was eventually stolen out from underneath us. It was not only made into a film, but also used again in a video by MTV Fluke-Hit-Popsters, American Hi-Fi. (Not to be confused with American Pearl, American Heartbreak, New American Shame, Kid Rock's insipid, "American Badass" or the Trash Brats' thrilling new record, "American Disaster".)

Does bitter as hell ring any bells? It just feels a little like while I was um, "resting", somebody swiped every idea me and my little rag-tag, guitar-army ever babbled drunkenly about at the old man bar and are now shamelessly cashing-in on 'em...wearing little pieces of my heart and soul around like a fake carnation on their pin-striped lapel. Imitation's the sincerest form of flattery and all that, but sometimes, when you're consistently excluded by mean-spirited Piss-Town frauds and hopelessly alienated by your profound economic insufficiencies, and then you see lame asses just ruthlessly trading on your weaker material, you wanna say something. You can't go 'round screamin' at people, but between you and me, just us kids, some nights (as Floridian-streetrocker Kevin K. sez), losing fucking hurts. While I'm here doing the rounds in second-hand clothes from Sears with my glam-shag lacquered down, begging for minimum wage jobs and getting turned down, after the mandatory background check, bands like Buck Cherry and the Black Halos are remindin' everybody of the ghosts of people I might have been.

Ever since grunge romanticized slackerdom in the eyes of all the

bred-to-excel NYU-grad, dilettante-types who are claimin' to be street-fightin' men and homeless, wild-eyed drifters, I can't even lay down in my bleak pit of estrangement and resign myself to any of the titles Midwesterners laid on me in the past, like "drunk" or "loser" or "failure" or "never-was" — I ain't got the cheekbones or pearly whites for any role at all.

People's idea of a romantic underdog nowadays is a model with a habit, or Jakob Dylan, poor guy, tortured and forced to live in his Father's shadow. Marlon Richards. Can you imagine the angst? And wasn't BECK supposedly homeless — except for, you know, the weekends, when he had to go home to his parent's mansion? "Sounds like a Stone Temple Sob Story To Me."

This repressed shitville is positively teeming with whiskey drinkin', hard livin' Romeos who are all spinnin' their hard luck yarns to sorority girls at the hipster bar, girls who apparently haven't seen "Barfly" or "Swingers" or "Trainspotting", where these suave gentleman-gangsters get most of their vicariously-gleaned, third-hand material. Go to Kaldi's or the Comet and eavesdrop on all of these native son richboys, tortured D.J.'s and playwrights, the lot of 'em, struggling, it's hell — rambling on and on about their depression and addiction and jail-time and how they've had to fight their way out of the gutter with nothin' but their two fists...and a dream. The hardships of touring the country in a run-down van, barely getting' along with their bandmates, but somehow they always initially neglect to mention the less romantic-sounding bits about their platinum cards and AAA memberships and rental properties and hundreds of guitars and cars and bars and the recording studios they own and all the money they inherited; or about the bassplayer's Dad, the C.E.O. of some monolithic media conglomerate which obediently serves the nefarious interests of human-rights violating corporations — at the expense of not only the exploited peoples of nations worldwide, but even of his own truth-telling reporters, who were censored, fired, and criminalized, all for exposing the crimes of our hometown Mister Burns. And predictably, it's always these rich parents bankrolling all these jive-ass, suck-shit local alternative bands who stay here forever playing leader of the laundromat, 'cause they all know they'd get laughed offstage anywhere else. The local Fonzarellis never bring that shit up for some reason. Or how they squandered their youth playing hometown bully jockstars by keepin' a white-knuckled grip so tightly upon their scenester monopoly that they choked whatever scene that existed to death. Or how they've imitated, slandered, and demonized any potentially rejuvenating new blood with a desirable girlfriend or a threatening cut of trousers, until no one with any interest in participating locally could afford to be seen in the presence of this scarlet-lettered-stranger with the dangerous ability to actually, well...ROCK. Fuck This Town. I've said it before — there are worse skeletons a guy could have in his checkered past than wearing scarves and drunkenly falling down weeping in the public eye.

"BUT I'LL POP BACK UP WHEN THE PRETTY BLUE LIGHTS COME ON" (Material Issue)

If ya dig the power-pop stylings of Tal Bachman or Jason Faulkner, check into this new L.A. band called Hutch, featuring former members of Imperial Drag and the purple-haired Zeroes. The only reason songwriter Joseph Hutchinson ain't on MTV right now is 'cause all his best songs are six minutes long and he needs to dumb-down and write some trite novelty song: "Getting stoned/Nintendo". Why are true pop greats always ghettoized as critics' darlings? Poor Kyle Vincent just forgot the "power" part of the equation, and as a direct result, he now languishes online and in coffeehouses and yuppie bookstores as a cult favorite of Barry Manilow enthusiasts who also stand in lines to get calendars autographed by Fabio...Don't let this happen to you, Joseph!

My other big new power-pop discoveries are this world-class rock-

'n'roll band who've just recently relocated to El Lay and are in the market for a permanent bass-player who shares their sensational classic pop and rock sensibilities. The Teenage Frames (!) are absolute giants in the biz of song right now. They instinctively understand everything that great rock'n'roll music should possess, and don't bore you flaunting their influences. I mean, very obviously, these guys love the NY Dolls and Cheap Trick and all the Greats, but they make it all sound fresh and new and original. They say their own thing and make the tried and true their own. One of 'em even produces the best authentic "fanzine" I've seen since — well, OK, one of my own shoddy self-indulgent efforts. It's called *Trash* and it's utterly brilliant, scathing, from-the-heart rock ranting at its finest. This guy shoulda written for *Ready To Snap* or *Creem*. He's that good! Some other outstanding soda-punk/hard-candy, catchy, anthemic, rockin' power-pop bands (who ain't forgot the all-important "power" part of the equation) that I urge you to check out, if you ain't already a fan, include the above-mentioned Trash Brats, the Beat Angels, American Heartbreak, Sixty Foot Dolls, Slow Motorcade, the Excessories, Die Electric, Red Telephone, and Three Colours Red.

"GO WHERE THE PARTY GOES, DRESSED UP IN SHINEY CLOTHES, WE DRINK THE WATER AND IT TASTES LIKE MEDICINE...WAKE-UP, WAKE-UP..." (Love Spit Love)

How can any remotely conscious, let alone conscientious, adult in this country, even those of you who imagine you'll benefit somehow in the short-term by this glaringly fixed presidential "election", not be appalled and terrified and outraged by the whole rigged sham? The media-puppets and talk radio propagandists just say, "Clinton did this or that, or was as corrupt as us Republicans — he pardons rich crooks just like we do, AND gets caught getting blowjobs, and the Supreme Court ruled, we all need to get behind our president now and 'get over it' and stop all this partisan-bickering," and the goddamn public falls for that! Even when those same smirking Republican spin doctors on cable smugly agree, however begrudgingly, that George "W", much like Ronald "W", is just a wind-up puppet moron being coached on "acting presidential", primarily by winking, waving, grinning, and grimacing on cue.

All my upwardly-mobile, obsessive-compulsive, ladder-climbing, A-Type, Lexus-driving neighbors, whose homes and gardens here in the leafy suburbs look like tightly clenched fists, seem to take so much comfort in the fact that that their good ol' boys are being strong-armed back into office by the shadowy permanent government, never sparing an afterthought about the millions who exist outside their soft, hunter-green and gold stock market sphere of corporate weasel privilege.

I noticed how impressed everyone was that Al Gore wrote his own concession speech, and I was thinking to myself, how the fuck can someone who can't even articulate their own ideas be considered fit to lead anybody anywhere? My 13-year old son is expected to write his own shit, so why not our ivory tower politicians? Especially those leering shits who got to attend and obviously slept through their Ivy League educations and ended up with a "D" average. Come to think of it, it's no wonder that so many of these little glamour-punk bands on the trendy indie labels think it's respectable, or acceptable, to find acclaim mainly by plagiarizing other peoples' obscure material. Over half the "junk" being praised in what passes for an underground press right now is redundant rehash and lazy, half-witted thievery of lyrics, images, riffs, and melodies from old bands they hoped you forgot. All you hip-hop dupes were somehow guilt-tripped into believing that "sampling" and mixing was an art. So why not plagiarism in all of its most naked manifestations? Puff Daddy or the Darlings From the Gutter on Puke Records.

The really chilling underlying message of the Inauguration Day

Parade's mammoth military presence (Heil To The Chief) is the same one being sent to me by the spoiled Cincinnati status quo I'm at cultural war with, and that is that dissent or opposition will not be suffered gladly. This whole town is structured around obedience and acquiescence to the mighty whitey corporate upper-classes. Particularly those who affect the trappings of superficial non-conformity.

Censorantans don't want the bad publicity that accompanies brazen racism, but when black men are steadily dying at the hands of the police (fifteen in five years), white "hipster" suburbia suddenly seems to be really sympathetic to the pressures our boys in blue are under. Know what I mean? The recent anti-globalization demonstrations that took place in Fountain Square were met with violent police overkill, random arrests, rubber bullets, riot-gear, horses, intimidation, provocation, every trick in the book...real Gestapo-like tactics. Upon entering the square, you had to show an I.D. to even be part of the protest, right? In contrast, when the Ku Klux Klan erected their racist-cross at Xmas-time, they were allowed to wear masks and Cincinnatians paid the cops overtime to protect them and their cross and even their automobiles. The City Council's message is pretty clear — they are ferociously pro-Big, Blind, Corporate Greed, pro-Race Profiling and militant police attack-dog tactics against "suspects" of color, and violently opposed to dialogue here in these parts. I can not tell you how appropriate it is that the city of Censoranti has, in recent years, adopted the pig as it's official mascot.

When even the most casual observers, including self-absorbed, inattentive, unlearned bozos like me, can't help but notice all this stuff going down, we're perceived by all the rich kids in the sharp shoes as whistle-blowing shit-stirrers. When I've just casually pointed these things out to the other people in my age-group, I've immediately been tarred as some kind of "angry young man" X-Files/Conspiracy-Paranoid by, once again, the very same hipster-bourgeoisie which prides itself on its self-identification with members of every faddish subculture they can dress up for, including hip-hop. I mean, it's the very same rich white hipsters who imitate black culture and emulate all those urban-styles and talk in ghettocentric-slang and own "D.J."-turntables who are the least appalled when yet another unarmed black suspect gets killed. And who are offended that I mentioned it. Mister Buzz-Kill.

In the last election, the local Republicans went so far as to attempt to "smear" a local candidate by employing the local news media to incessantly refer to his support of "minority set-asides"...this "liberal" who didn't represent "our hometown values". The fucking news repeated those mantras over and over, and there was even a commercial dramatization, where a wife sits typing at her computer, only to discover...(SHOCK!) (GASP!) (HORROR!)...that this, this, this...(spits it...) "Liberal Portune even favors...GAY MARRIAGES!" Somehow, he still ended up getting elected here in this intolerant Peyton Place-like, rightwing stronghold, but the point is how, even amidst the punk underground, "liberal" has somehow been revised to mean "zealous commie". Wild! To suggest that maybe it's worthy of some robust debate about why our nation is secretly bombing IRAQ back into the stone-age is considered unpatriotic. The smart-alec trendy punk bands wear "BOMB IRAQ" buttons on their album covers and the yee-ha redneck punk contingents wave their confederate flags and take another sluga hootch.

I voted in the last election, but from what I understand, my ballot was cast aside as an under-vote when I refused to prick the dot beside the name of the anti-porn, religious, gun-nut, right-wing sheriff, Simon Leis, who ran uncontested. I suspect many other people did this as well. It's the ultra-conservative, ambitious judges and prosecutors

HIT SQUAD

you gotta worry about. To them, us peasants are just statistics they can hold up to say they're "tough on crime". Many, many of my friends are on probation, incarcerated, or are "fugitives", but the vast majority of them are in no way violent, dangerous, or in my view, criminal. They're just fuck-ups. Drop-outs. Harmless drunkard bozos trapped in poverty who do drugs to distract themselves from their hopeless ruts. Smalltown losers who, lacking competent legal representation, have become ensnared in the diabolical machinery of the classist incarceration-nation for irresponsibly having failed to jump through all the rigorous hoops demanded by the slippery slope of the crooked system. Once they get your name on the list, it takes a lot of money and kissing endless bureaucrat ass to ever "pay one's debt to society". Clearly, the wealthy have a different rule-book, and have received different information than us dirt-poor, bohemian-swashbucklers. Addiction is slavery, but so is minimum wage. The Indiana senator who advocated the death-penalty for drug-dealers got his drug-dealer son off with a thirty day cakewalk. Hypocrites and fake puritans practicing drive-through Christianity and sliding-scale morality. Disgusting.

My first offense, a drunk driving conviction from years back, prevents me from getting six dollars an hour gas station jobs where my central responsibilities would include sitting on a stool, taking people's money, and re-stocking the cooler. Even the carwash down the street requires all these elaborate police and background checks, but when your President got busted for the same thing it, since he was a member of a well-connected family, all was forgiven and buried, except that maybe some fines were paid. But now he can be trusted with the future of humanity on this planet, whereas I can't be trusted to manage the scratch off lotto tickets, two litres of Coke, and (state-endorsed, deadly, addictive, over-priced) coffin nails. Justice and Equality.

JUST CAUSE WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE GONNA WIN 'EM ALL..." (the Dogs D'Amour)

While vapid Top 40 dance music is force-fed down our throats all day — music for people who like well-toned stomach muscles — all the rockers and songwriters I hold in highest esteem are completely ignored, forcing me to continue ranting like this when 99% of those who skimmed this column have already gotten restless with my sour grapes and self-pity and moved on to that fabulous interview with the Self-Mutilation City Rapists, whose heavily-tattooed bassist's new pair of Creepers pictured on the back of their latest Dirty-Syringe 7" are gonna change the way their town's token punk slut junkie stripper wears her hair for a weekend.

For years, all my exes and in-laws have pestered me to concede rock'n'roll failure and trade in my stinky leathers and broken microphone for a computer and get some preposterous career as a "music journalist", foolishly believing that some glossy "Gen Y" men's magazine would ever hire me to sing the praises of Spencer Jones and Jeff Drake, while character assassinating their cash cow poseur models. Just take a look at all those *Spin*, *Metal Edge*, and *NY Times* dorks that MTV employs to lie about music on their goddamn countdown shows. This despicable Rob Sheffield, *Rolling Stone* columnist, absolutely champions Ricky Martin and Britney Spears. No one's gonna pay me to ramble on about Sour Jazz and Freddy Lynxx and Sonny Vincent and Paige Darling and Bobby Durango and Inger Lorre and Falling James and Alex Mitchell and Chick Graning and Phoebe Legere and

Alison Gordy and Bryan Small, or about Peter Perret and David Johansen and the Harry Smith's blues record, y'know?

If baby boomer icons like Ray Davies, Rod Stewart, or Keith Richards were capable of still releasing records even half as vital as Dave Kusworth, Nikki Sudden, Tex Perkins, or Tyla, all of Jack Rabin's gradschool/record collector/serious rock critic pals would be having a heyday penning worshipful reviews full of glimmery praise, arcane sub-references, and clever wordplay, hailing it as the final, triumphant return to rock'n'roll splendor. Dave Kusworth has an album out right now full of vintage Faces or Rolling Stones-quality songs, but I'd be surprised if he moves a thousand copies.

The finest living American songwriter, still in razor-sharp command of his powers, Paul K., has released thirteen albums of literate, inspired, confessional songs, and in a more righteous or attentive world he'd be celebrated alongside raw-deal names like (his fallen mentor,) Townes Van Zandt, John Prine, Lou Reed, or Jim Carroll as the poet laureate of the underworld. Instead, he takes jobs, when he can get them, as a nanny, or working at the Bannana Republic in the mall, for

fuck's sake, and right now you're wondering if I'm talking about the guy from the Road Vultures! Critics' darling Mark Eitzel couldn't even sit at the same bar as Paul K., believe me. I implore you to seek out his mostly out-of-print records in your neighborhood cut-out bin — you'll soon be lobbying your rich friends to put more of his music out, since the cat's a national treasure.

Or my old drinkin' buddy Eddie Nichols, the magnetic crooner/showman-extraordinaire for the stalwart Royal Crown Revue. This guy grew up boxing in Brooklyn, playing stand-up bass in early punk bands, and fighting diligently for years to preserve the vitality and living-viability of the swing-era music he loved so much. He was almost single-handedly responsible for bringing that sound back and making it seem exciting to young people again, only to see every back ska-band with horn players in Southern California hijack the revival bandwagon and oversaturate the market with lousy, gimmickey, swing tunes, until no one but former skinheads having a middle-aged identity crisis would want to hear of swing again. His hard work did help revive his buddy Brian Setzer's career, though, and that's cool. Five or six years ago, I was penning diatribes about how criminally overlooked Brian was!

"I'M JUST WAITING ON MY DREAM, CAUSE THE FAST ONES, THE FAST ONES ALWAYS RIDE FOR FREE..." (Mother Love Bone)

The good news is that there's still a few animals left out in the yard. I'm somedays heartened by the current popularity of Texas Terri and Electric Frankenstein, even if I'm not as impressed by the ten zillion Nashville Pussy-style punk'n'roll bands suddenly riding their coattails. All my favorite elder-statesmen have been releasing albums again — even if I can't afford them, at least I can be confident that cats like Patti Smith and Joe Strummer are still gonna have something more significant to convey than "I shoot smack! I swear to God! I really do!", like all these punk-gone-cockrock groups I'm sick to death of.

Some insurgent labels are starting to release some good rock music. Vicious Kitten, I-94 Recordings, Raul Mira's Chatterbox, Sal's "Fistfull of Rocknroll" comp.s...Oh yeah, I'm making some records this summer. Songs about hotrods and switchblades, beer cans, and belt buckles, and being tuff. And pussy, lots of pussy, and the devil. Kicking ass on the wild side...hope ya like 'em...join the loverock liberation front...webtv.net/i94rec/i94Recordings +

(JASON DIMITRI MONROE deserves a steady income stream!)

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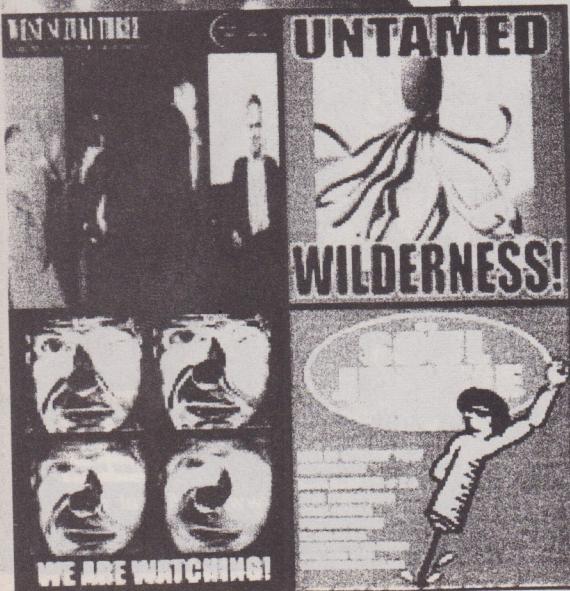
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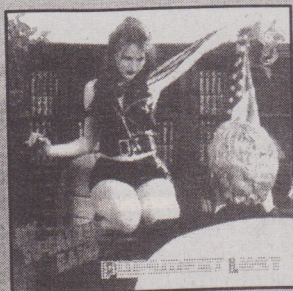
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THE ALMIGHTY TOP TENS

SHITLIST

Jeff Bale

- 1) BLACK HALOS - "The Violent Years" CD
- 2) CHARGE 69 - "Vos lois ne sont pas nos règles" CD
- 3) DICKIES - "Dawn of the Dickies" CD
- 4) DONNAS - "Turn 21" CD
- 5) DREAM DATES - "Moans on the Phone" 7"
- 6) ELECTRIC PRUNES - "Lost Dreams" CD
- 7) HIVES - "Hate to Say I Told You So" 7"
- 8) THE JOLT - reissue of s/t LP
- 9) THIRD BARDO - "5 Years Ahead of My Time" 10"
- 10) TRASH BRATS - "Songs in the Key of F.U." CD

Dimitri Monroe

- 1) V/A - Vicious Kitten's "Rocknroll War" CD
- 2) BRIAN O'BIVION - "Badly Beaten But Still Conscious" CD
- 3) PAUL K. - "Achilles Heel" CD
- 4) VICE PRINCIPALS - "After School with..." CD
- 5) TORPEDOS - "No Refills" CD
- 6) JONESES - "Criminal History" CD
- 7) SOVINES - "The Sad Last Days Of..." CD
- 8) HANGMEN - "Metallic I.O.U." CD
- 9) KYLE VINCENT - "s/t" CD
- 10) DIE ELECTRIC - "We're A Believer" CD

Adam X

- 1) FIGGS - "Sucking In Stereo" CD
- 2) HIVES - "Veni Vidi Vicious" CD
- 3) HANGMEN - "Metallic I.O.U." CD
- 4) STREET WALKIN' CHEETAHS - "Waiting for the Death..." CD
- 5) GLUCIFER - "Tender is the Savage" CD
- 6) CHRONICS - "Soul Shaker" CD
- 7) COYOTE SHIVERS - CD
- 8) TSAR - CD
- 9) NITRO - "O.F.R." CD
- 10) AMERICAN HEARTBREAK/TOILET BOYS - split 7"

Mitch Cardwell

- 1) CHIEFS - "Hollywest Crisis" LP
- 2) HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE - everything
- 3) NOW TIME DELEGATION - "Watch For Today" LP
- 4) 20/20 - LP

- 5) BRIEFS - "Hit After Hit" LP
- 6) ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT - "Group Sounds" CD
- 7) PINHEAD GUNPOWDER - live 3/8/01
- 8) NUMBERS - "Music Design" 10"EP
- 9) THEE ANTONIO THREE - 7" EP
- 11) THE PATTERN

Mark Devito

- 10) BLACK SABBATH - "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath" LP
- 9) OPERATOR:GENERATOR - "Polar Fleet" CD
- 8) COMMODORES - "Anthology" CD
- 7) POISON GIRLS - "All Systems Go" 7"
- 6) VAN HALEN - "1" LP
- 5) PROPAGANDHI - "Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes" 2 x LP
- 4) CRAMPS - "Psychodelic Jungle" LP
- 3) PEARL HARBOR & THE EXPLOSIONS - "Don't Follow Me..." LP
- 2) EXCEL - "Split Image" CD
- 1) EXODUS - "Bonded By Blood" CD

Jeremy Cool

- 1) LILLINGTONS - "Backchannel Broadcast" CD
- 2) ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES - "Blow In The Wind" CD
- 3) SCARED OF CHAKA - "Seven Stories Tall" CD
- 4) NOFX & AMERICAN STEEL - live at Slim's
- 5) J-CHURCH, AVAIL & PROPAGANDHI - live
- 6) SAMIAM - "Ashtray" CD
- 7) THE EXPLOSION - live
- 8) HALF-LIFE - (best video game ever?)
- 9) SCREECHING WEASEL - "Teen Punks In Heat" CD
- 10) SELBY TIGERS - "Charm City" CD

Jami Wolf

- 1) BODIES "Addicted To You" LP
- 2) EAST SIDE SUICIDES - live in Austin
- 3) DIRTY SWEETS - live in Austin
- 4) ELECTRIC WIZARD - "Dopethrone" LP + live
- 5) RITCHIE WHITES/LOWER CLASS BRATS - live in Austin

- 6) TEMPLARS, A.P.A., MAJOR ACCIDENT - live in Boston
- 7) COCKNOOSE - "White Trash Messiahs" CD

Brett Mathews

- DIVIT/EVERYDAY VICTORY - split CD
- FABULOUS DISASTER - "Put Out Or Get Out" CD
- THE PATTERN
- ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMEES
- AVAIL/PROPAGANDHI - live
- Seeing an amazing band like SMALL BROWN BIKE open for HOT WATER MUSIC
- HOT WATER MUSIC - "A Flight And A Crash" CD/LP
- ODD NUMBERS - "Trials And Tribulations Of..." CD
- TRAVOLTAS - "Teenbeat" CD
- SAN GERONIMO - s/t CD EP

Dave Johnson

- 1) Jawbreaker - "24 Hour Revenge Therapy"
- 2) Pinhead Gunpowder - Live @ The Starry Plough, Berkeley
- 3) Rocket From the Crypt - "Group Sounds" + Live @ Bottom of the Hill
- 4) Avail/Propagandhi/J Church - Live @ Bottom of the Hill
- 5) Hot Water Music - Live @Bottom of the Hill
- 6) The Sultans - "Ghost Ship" CD
- 7) The (International) Noise Conspiracy - "Survival Sickness" CD
- 8) The Modern Lovers - self titled CD
- 9) San Geronimo - S/T CDEP
- 10) Steel Reserve in the Forty Ounce Container

Your fearless leaders through the vast and daunting catacombs of rock 'n' roll recordings. Just so you know who to blame when you plunk down your hard earned cash on a slab of plastic, run home as fast as your little punk legs will carry you and spin it anxiously, only to find it completely, totally and indisputably sucks: Athena Dread (AD), Tina Lucchesi (TL), Jeremy Cool (JER), Brett Mathews (BAM), Jimi Cheetah (JC), Sara Bellum (SB), Jeff Bale (JB), Dimitri Monroe (DJM), Jami Wolf (JAW), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Mark Devito (MD), Adam X (X), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Jimmy Shields (JS), Chris Jaluska (CJ) and John Cattivera (JDC)

S H I T L I S T



ACID KING/MYSTICK KREWE OF CLEARLIGHT
"Free" split CD

I love this. ACID KING start you off in fine form with a brilliant 4-song blaze of tripology; Lori S. has a

hauntingly beautiful voice and the sheer heavy flavor of the songs make it virtually impossible to get off the couch. I crafted a bong out of a plastic honey bear while listening to this. The MYSTICK KREWE are more traditional in that big rock way, and they deliver up two songs that leave that DEEP PURPLE taste in your mouth. (MD) (Man's Ruin/2626 3rd Street/San Francisco, CA 94107)

ADAMANTIUM

"when it rains, it pours" CD

Metallic hardcore that chugs along, then stops and starts back up again with a punishing blow. It seems like the lyrics are personal, though at times they're hard to figure out. Very "artsy" artwork, but the music's not all that interesting. †(AD) (Indecision/PO Box 5781/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

ALLERGIC TO WHORES

"Simple Minds are Easy to Assemble" CD

Basic, generic three-chord punk that varies from mid-tempo to better, faster stuff. This is so basic and generic that I can't think of anything to compare it to, but I'll take it any day, generic or not, over that arty lame emo stuff. †(AD) (Firebrand/PO Box 126/Uniontown, OH 44685)

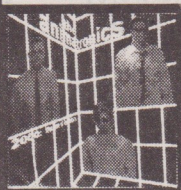


ALL SYSTEMS GO
"I'll Be Your Radio" CD-EP

ASG rules and that's all that there is to that. This recording features the old lineup of Frank Daly (no longer with the band) and

Mark Arnold (guitar god!) from BIG DRILL CAR, and the almighty John Kastner from the DOUGHBOYS. This is just a sampling, as it has two songs off of their readily available CD, and either one or two unreleased tracks, depending if you have their track from the Bad Taste sampler. Maybe the best power pop band since, well, their previous bands!! (BAM)

(Bad Taste/Stora Soderg. 38/S.-222 23 Lund/SWEDEN)

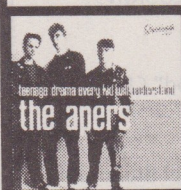


ANIMATRONICS

"2000: Year of The Future" CD

Kind of a weird mix of DEVO, the CARS, and MAN OR ASTROMAN, similar to the CAUSEY WAY. It's

pretty cool, but it ultimately turns up flat due to poor production. I think that if these guys got a stronger drummer and a ham-fisted producer, they could go far. (JER) (Morphius/PO Box/Baltimore, MD 21203)



APERS

"Teenage Drama Every Kid Will Understand" CD

Pretty cool RAMONES-school pop punk from the Netherlands. Fans of early Mutant Pop stuff will

definitely want to check this out. (JER) (Stardumb/PO Box 21145/3001 AC Rotterdam/HOLLAND)

THE ATOMIC BITCHWAX

"II" CD

Riff-heavy in the way BLACK SABBATH and old AEROSMITH were. Psycho-Delia in the way MONSTER MAGNET is. Track 4 even has an air of THIN LIZZY's funkiness, with lotsa wah-wah guitar and drum fills, so it's no question that they're playing for those who like to get bong-soaked. (X)

(TeePee/PO Box 20307/New York, NY 10009)

AVSKUM

"In the Spirit of Mass Destruction" CD

This is AVSKUM's second album since they got the band back together. AVSKUM are from Sweden and are more "rock" than "punk", because they sound a hell of a lot like MOTÖRHEAD blended with a bit of DISCHARGE. Totally rocking! †(AD) (Prank/PO Box 410892/San Francisco, CA 94141)



BAD ASTRONAUT

"Acrophobe" CD

A side (?) project from LAGWAGON's singer, with

the man playing guitar and singing on this one. While the vocals are distinctively familiar, this is definitely a venture into a more pop/indie direction that reminds me of a muted NERFHERDER. Excellent playing and production does nothing to shake off that college rock vibe. (RK) (Honest Don's/PO Box 192027/San Francisco, CA 94119)



BAD FORM

"Lights Out" 7" EP

Thrashy and gruff. It sounds like old BUTTHOLE SURFERS mixed with Estrus Records-type stuff like the MONKEYWRENCH or LORD

HIGH FIXERS. Some pretty good and intense lyrics round out the package. (JC) (Mad at the World/PO Box 5216/New Brunswick, NJ 08901)



BAD LUCK CHARMS

"Bad Luck & Heartbreak" CD

The BAD LUCK CHARMS are a bunch of greasers playing punked-out rockabilly similar to the STRAY CATS.

†Their punkier moments sound very much like SOCIAL DISTORTION. †They sound cool and look cool. (MC)

(Zodiac/6611 Somerset Street/Harrisburg, PA 17111)

BANE

"It All Comes Down to This" CD

The photography on this release is impressive, whereas musically BANE play straight-edge stop-start chugga chugga type of stuff. I've heard them before and wasn't very impressed, but this release is solid.

Overall I get the feeling that whoever writes the lyrics got really screwed over several times and is now very pissed. (AD) (Equal Vision/PO Box 14/Hudson, NY 12534)



BEATINGS

"Sex Beat/The Ballad of Jimmy and Jenny" 7"

Wow! The A-side is a rockin' cover of the GUN CLUB classic, "Sex Beat", with way cool lead parts. The

"ballad" on the flip is anything but a ballad—it's a glam punk blast with high-pitched, possibly female background vocals.

Baltimore's BEATINGS sound like the bastard offspring of the BLACK HALOS and TRASH BRATS. (JB)

(Wax, no address)



BEAT MERCHANTS

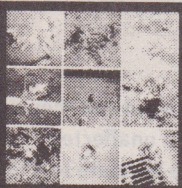
"The Beats Go On" CD

Circle Records deserves a lot of credit for reissuing virtually everything by mid-60's British group the BEAT MERCHANTS,

including lots of unreleased demos.

Although best known for their smashmouth punky R&B A-sides like "Pretty Face" and "So Fine", which are up to PRETTY THINGS, BIRDS, and early PRIMITIVES standards, it turns out that the band also recorded a bunch of fetching self-penned Merseybeat sides (such as "Was Before" and "All She Wants is Me"). Includes Mike Stax liner notes and great packaging. (JB)

(Circle/Sutton in Ashfield/Notts/ENGLAND)



BEEF WELLINGTON

"That's Me/Never Go There Again" 7"

This record is pure carnage, from the disgusting montage of roadkill that is on the

cover to the complete rock'n'roll massacre they create in the songs. Not fast and furious, but slow, messed up, barely decipherable, and extremely creepy. Excellent. (JC)

(dbs/PO Box 2550/3500 GN Utrecht/HOLLAND)

BELTONES

"Shitty In Pink/Nobody To Love" 7"

This is probably the best (and punkest) BELTONES release to date, so the wait was worth it. This band always delivers great punk with fantastic whiskey-drenched vocals, and this is most evident in the well-crafted 77 punker "Shitty In Pink". The flip is a great NIPS cover. (MC)

(Radio/PO Box 1452/ Sonoma, CA 95476)

BENÜMB

"Withering Strands of Hope" CD

Singer Pete is the nicest guy in hardcore, a real sweetie. The spoken word intro, however, is anything but sweet; like the music, it's depraved and ugly and a bit scary. BENÜMB blends an aggressive dose of hardcore and a measured quantity of grindcore, and takes their power violence

influences and turns them into their own blend of aggro punch-in-the-face doom and destruction. (AD)

(Relapse/PO Box 2060/Upper Darby, PA 19082)



BLACK HALOS

"The Violent Years" CD

If there was any justice in the world, these guys would be plastered all over the covers of glossy rock magazines and be featured

on every mainstream radio station's playlist. But there isn't, which means that underground cats like us get to keep them all to ourselves. A brand new collection of great crunched-out punk'n'rollers with terrific melodies that you can't get out of your head, and they're even better live. (JB)

(SubPop/PO Box 20645/Seattle, WA 98102)

BLACK HALOS/TUULI

split 7"

This holiday theme release is a definite keeper. The BLACK HALOS' "Homeless for Christmas" is characteristically crunchy, rockin', and hook-filled, though it's slower and has a moodier ambience than their balls-out rockers. TUULI weigh in with one of their tuneful girl pop numbers, but it too is slower than normal and has an atypical organ fill instead of the usual loud guitars. (JB)

(Sympathy for the Record Industry)

BLACK QUEEN

"The Anthropocolypse" CD

Ripping and dark, this release is a relentless barrage of aural beatings that you won't be able to walk away from. Chunky and pounding riffs add to the intricate layers of the songwriting, but BLACK QUEEN definitely have created a consistent mood here. It is dark and moody, but has the flow of a SABBATH album with its ability to lead you through ALL that is dark, from the rough, fast screaming to the ethereal synapses of nightmarish visions. (MD)

(Catastrophic Sound/2018 Shattuck Avenue, pmb #103/Berkeley, CA 94704)

BLOOD BROTHERS

"The Adultery Is Ripe" CD

I want to keep this one short and sweet. The BLOOD BROTHERS are great. Check them out, especially live. (JC)

(Second Nature/PO Box 11543/Kansas City, MO 64138)

REVIEWS

BLUTCH

"Enjoy Your Flight" CD

What can I say about BLUTCH? Imagine SABBATH playing N.I.B. at the top of your stairs, when from out of nowhere, SOUNDGARDEN and SLAYER sneak up behind them and push them over the edge with a giant floor tom. They have a deep grinding rhythm going (finest moment to me is "The Headache" which seems the best composed track of the album), but for the most part it is clay-mation metal. Rock on Gumby, but not in my house. (MD)

(Delboy/PO Box 75/9000 Gent 12/BELGIUM)

BODIES

"Addicted To You" LP

Alrighty, ladies and gents...what we have here is an LP version of the BODIES' "Addicted To You" EP plus more! This includes tracks off of various 7"ers like the hard-to-find "Suicide" single, but better still it includes the never-before released tracks "Down On The Boulevard", "Left-Right", and "I Gotta Go". You need this. (JAW)

(Radio Blast/PO Box 160308/40566 Düsseldorf/GERMANY)



BODIES

"3 Brand New Songs" 7"

The BODIES rule, and there's really nothing else to say. Here are three new aggro in-your-face punk rippers with a keen sense of

pop. Sound weird? Who cares, go buy anything by this band and shut the fuck up. (BAM)

(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)



BOMBSHELL ROCKS

"Radio Control" 7"

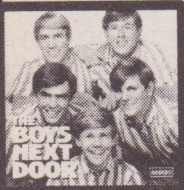
The title track is taken from their Burning Heart full-length, and the two B-sides are exclusive to this record. Catchy streetpunk/rock

that's a lot like RANCID's punker radio hits.

This band writes great songs. (BAM)

(Green Hell/Von Steuben-strasse 17/D-48143 Munster/GERMANY)

SHITLIST



BOYS NEXT DOOR

s/t CD

"Suddenly She Was Gone" is a moody 60's garage pop gem, so I had high hopes for this CD. Alas, it covers a much wider musical gamut,

ranging from cool surf/hot rod and folk rock cuts to syrupy summertime pop songs reminiscent of the ASSOCIATION. Too many of the latter are nauseatingly sappy and clean-cut for my taste. (JB)

(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



BOY SETS FIRE

"Suckerpunchtraining" CD EP

Three new tracks, all pretty long. If ya dig that crunchy, metallic, overdriven modern hardcore sound, then you'll

dig the signature BOY SETS FIRE style. The standout for me is the excellent cover of "Rocket Man", which really rocks and gives ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES more than a run for their money! (RK)

(Join The Team

Player/www.jointheteamplayer.com)



BRIDE JUST DIED

"All Hallows Eve" CD

Thanx to Rat Scabies, it's got a touch of DAMNED in the production. BRIDE reminds me of a very garagey, punk L.E.S.

STITCHES. I'm hoping that'll lure a few of you. This disc's got a lot of energy happening, so find it if you can. (X)
(NDN/PO Box 131471/The Woodlands, TX 77393)



BRIEFS

"Poor and Weird/Rotten Love" 7"

On this single the BRIEFS churn out two quirky old-style punk songs in a vaguely WEIRDOS vein.

"Poor and Weird" has a cool singalong chorus and a dirty lead break; the flip is slower and heavier, but has a nice repetitive drum beat and another good chorus. Kurt Bloch produced. (JB)

(Dirtnap/PO Box 21249/Seattle, WA 98111)

BUCKFAST SUPERBEE

"You Know How The Song Goes" CD

Unfortunately, we do. Buckfast is a cheap and strong wine brewed by monks on the East Coast of Scotland, and all the punks used to get smashed on it. Unfortunately, these Californians appear not have sampled its delights. Instead, they turn in a very precise, well-played, and utterly nondescript set of melodic hardcore cum college rock of downer music. (RK)

(Walking/PO Box 49916/Los Angeles, CA 90049)

CANDYGIRL

"Oh, Jacky Boy/Candygirl" 7"

This came out over a year ago, but something this awesome needs a review. This 45 is a stunning slice of sugar-dipped punk pop that's infectious, 100% sweet, and will cause cavities. Two great tunes about boys, rock'n'roll, and (most importantly) candy. In the same league as the BOBBYTEENS. (MC)
(Jetstar/1634 Breda Avenue/ St. Paul, MN 55108)

CANDY SNATCHERS

"Takin' a Ride" CD

How can I not get behind any CD which opens with Paul Westerberg's "Takin' a Ride" and includes former DEVIL DOG Steve Baise? If you wanna hear who rallied such rock bands as the GAZA STRIPPERS and STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS, then listen here. This way too short 6-song release is a better example of what the CANDY SNATCHERS do right, and Coldfront did right by picking it up. (X)

(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)



CANDY SNATCHERS/CHEAP DATES

"This Is Rock N Roll" CD

The CANDY SNATCHERS rule. If you don't already know that, what the fuck are you doing reading this

mag? Full-throttle bar rock, kicked off with the classic tittle track by the almighty KIDS. The riff-filled CHEAP DATES follow suit nicely. 19 rockin' tracks here. Fetch! (BAM)
(Mans Ruin/www.mansruin.com)

CHARGE 69

"Vos lois ne sont pas nos règles" CD

Outstanding melodic "skunk" music à la



française, not unlike great early 80's French bands like KOMINTERN SECT and the TROTSKIDS. After one listen to irresistibly catchy punk classics like "Pendule" and "Destin en Main", you'll be

hooked for life. More Oi and streetpunk bands should listen to CHARGE 69 to learn how to write powerful songs with great hooks. (JB)

(Combat Rock/7 Rue du Paquis/57950 Montigny-les-Metz/France)

CELL BLOCK 5

"Push It" CD

CB5 is a longhair's punk band, so a lot of punks refuse to like 'em. At times, they remind me most of the CIRCLE JERKS. My favorite member of the band is Chris "the kid", who's the shorthair, SLICK PUNK. Catch 'em live, they're everywhere. (X)
(Industrial Strength/2824 Regatta Blvd/Richmond, CA 94804)

CHAINSAW MEN

"Electric Juju" CD

This is a great "four chord" band and they do it well, but quite honestly I'm unaffected. There's just not enough here to relate to. I'm guessing that if I were to be sold on the band it would happen live, and I'm also guessing there's a good chance it would happen. (X)
(NKVD/PO Box 60369/San Diego, CA 92166)

CHEMO KIDS

"Radiation Generation" CD

I knew I'd heard the name, now it was time to hear the tunes. Not much to mention here, just poor production that's "keepin' it all real." It's punk rock, alright, but I couldn't really tell ya one thing that sets it apart from the flock. Maybe I'm just getting old, but so are the U.K. SUBS and they still wail. (X)
(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

CHERRY POPPIN' DADDIES

"Soul Caddy" CD

I'm the man who loves the entire ADAM ANT and SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK catalogues, so this works my "shit" like Play-Doh, since it molds Techno, Swing, Rock-a-billy, Ska, Psychedelia, and even Glitter Rock. When it's great it's good, and when it's bad it is shit. The opening tracks on "Soul Daddy" blew me away, but most of it was like a vacation with a medicated MORRISSEY on prozac. (X)

(Mojo/1453 14th Street, Box 284/Santa Barbara, CA 90404)

CHIEFS

"Hollywest Crisis" LP

An absolutely essential reissue. The great CHIEFS tune "Blues" was one of the many hits on "Killed by Death #2", and it's present here with twelve other great ones. Fans of the recent CONTROLLERS and GEARS reissues will want to snatch this up. Highest recommendation. (MC)
(Hate/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Rome/ITALY)



CHRIS WARE BAND "Soul Shakedown" CD

Kinda garagey, kinda rednecky, kinda fast. I found myself interested by the fourth track, "Do You Remember", but then it

was back to more of the same. Still, it was all done pretty damn well. (X)
(Fan Attic/PO Box 391494/Cambridge, MA 02139)

CHRONICS

"Soulshaker" CD

If you don't mind various variations of the same riffs, this CHRONICS disc kicks like the LIME SPIDERS. This is sorta like vintage-sounding MURDER CITY DEVILS, and I'll confess that I loved the singing right from the start since Magnus Rudolfsson's got Johansen's NY DOLLS' sassy soul to the bone. This is from Denmark, and it's really fawkin' kool. (X)

(Bad Afro/Poste Restante/Frederiksberg Alle 6/DK-1820 Frederiksberg C/DENMARK)

COCKNOOSE

"White Trash Messiahs" CD

COCKNOOSE rule the Midwest shithole otherwise known as Lawrence, Kansas. Their songs are not nice and the chances are that, if you are faint of heart, you might not be able to deal with them. This is the greasy, grimy, dare I say hairy and disgusting rock'n'roll that you thought (and probably hoped) did not still exist, but guess what, it does, and it's good. Very few bands can pull it off well, without sounding like cheesed-out metal or shitty-ass country-rock horseshit. (JAW)
(Steelcage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)



COCKROACHES

"We Taught The World How To Suck" CD

I can't understand a damn word here, since it's all in Russian, but I like what I hear. Pop punk in the

Lookout vein, not unlike SQUIRTGUN or the CONNIE DUNGS, with good production and decent vocals. Not bad, but good luck finding it. (JER)
(address unreadable)

COPS AND ROBBERS

"Face to Face with Hate" CD

It seems there are a lot of bands coming out of the Boston area lately with this kind of sound: old-school hardcore that's totally unlike a lot of other hardcore of today. It's not power-violence, it's not thrash, it's not straight-edge (sounding), it's just good old hardcore punk. The singer sounds like a big, tough guy, but he actually looks kind of young and small in the photo. (AD)
(ADD/270 Central Street/Hingham, MA 02043)

CRAIG'S BROTHER

"Lost at Sea" CD

Horrible melodic pop-punk that will no doubt have the 14-year olds swooning. I assume it's representative of the other stuff released on Tooth & Nail. The first song sounds like a children's mass, complete with choir. †Not for me. (MC)

(www.toothandnail.com)

CROATAN

"Curse Of The Red Queen" CD

An amazing effort from a two-piece group. Excellent playing and strong vocals are constant throughout this disc. Although I wouldn't really call it metal, it's angry and extremely powerful even though the changes and twists are continuous to the point of being tedious. It's garagey enough to be different and punky, but the talent takes it to another level that is very appealing. (MD)
(Man's Ruin/2626 3rd Street/San Francisco, CA 94107)

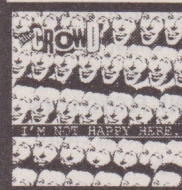
CROM

"The Cocaine Wars, 1974-1989" CD

If the mescaline is starting to wear off and someone just stole your record collection and this is the only thing left in your apartment to listen to, don't. Be afraid, be very afraid,

REVIEWS

since this is amazing and confusing at the same time. It goes from ripping off "Everybody Wants Some" by VAN HALEN to dark concoctions of typical metal sludge to sampling SABBATH to ROBIN TROWER, so CROM is probably bad for you. (MD)
(Pessimiser/PO Box 1070/Hermosa Beach, CA 90254)



THE CROWD

"I'm Not Happy Here" 7"

Weird as hell. I'm pretty sure that these are three brand new songs from the original CROWD, an old Orange County beach punk

band. Old or new, they are great upbeat punk rock tunes with one hell of a hook, which is right where they left off. Quite similar to the ADOLESCENTS, which is a great thing. (BAM)
(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

CRUDE

s/t CD

CRUDE are from Japan's northern island of Hokkaido. The super-long intro is really boring, but after that the band plays ten songs of amazing hardcore thrash. (AD)
(Dynamite Kids/c/o Itkonen/Pekantie 26/58500 Punkaharju/FINLAND)

CUB COUNTRY/UTAH SLIM

split CD

Here's something that'll get your attention: Blake Schwarzenbach. CUB COUNTRY features Jeremy Chatelain and Blake from JETS TO BRAZIL doing acoustic country/pop, with Jeremy handling the vocals and Blake on piano. Fans of JTB's quiet moments won't be disappointed. UTAH SLIM is also on the country side, but I detect a subtle TOM WAITS feel. (MC)
(Ear To Ground/146 Powers Street/Brooklyn, NY 11211)

CURBSIDE

"Reclaim" CD

Not a hardcore record, as the football cover art would lead one to believe. Most of this is straightforward punk, nothing spectacular. There are a few bullshit countrified acoustic moments that really don't fit with the other material, but otherwise it's not so bad. (MC)
(Half Pint Records/ www.hprecords.com)

SHITLIST

DANDY WARHOLS

"Tales from Urban Bohemia" CD

This disc is the coolest thing we sell in the lame yuppie record store where I work, so I wanted to like it, especially since I'm nothing but a New Wave fag at heart. The problem is that there's nothing on this CD as catchy as their lone hit, "Not If You Were The Last Junkie On Earth", and LOVE & ROCKETS already did this whole shtick better fifteen years ago. These precious artschool dolls, armed with fey haircuts, trustfunds, and ironic detachment, have simply ransacked the BOWIE, BEATLES, and PINK FLOYD back catalogs, filtering their melodies and chord progressions through postmodern production-gimmickry, "sampling" as shamelessly as PUFF DADDY. (JDM) (on a major label)

DAYBREAK

"Frozen Wintered Realms of my Moonlit Record Collection" 7" picture disc

Twenty songs on a slab of 7" vinyl is an instant plus. To make it even better, DAYBREAK are really good, playing a blend of different styles of hardcore punk. Some of their songs are straight up thrash, others get more into the grind thing, and yet others are more influenced by the power violence bands. Great debut release. †(AD) (Reptilian/403 S. Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)



DAYLIGHT LOVERS

s/t CD

One of best records I got for review. Montreal's DAYLIGHT LOVERS blow away their previous singles on this debut long player. Sixteen fantastic garage punk songs, including an awesome PACK cover. Fans of the SPACESHITS need this. One of the many recent hit albums released by Sympathy. (MC) (www.sympathyrecords.com)

D.D.I./STALKER

split 12"

D.D.I. are from Italy, and STALKER are from Germany. Both bands play hardcore. There's not much else to say. (AD) (Thought Crime/Jens Walter/Petersburgerstr. 68/10249 Berlin/GERMANY)



DEATH BY STEREO

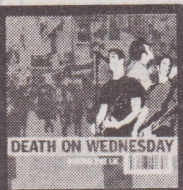
"Day Of The Death" CD

You have to hand it to Epitaph, they are a benchmark for quality and production whatever genre they dabble in. This is

tough-guy hardcore par excellence.

Angry, and fast, yet clean and powerful, with enough twists and changes to keep it interesting, and a singer who doesn't sound too ridiculous. (RK)

(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)



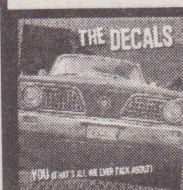
DEATH ON WEDNESDAY

"Buying The Lie" CD

Mix a highly polished melodic SoCal sound with the vocal stylings of DANZIG, or mebbe even a little MIKE NESS, and you

have this excellent release. Trevor Keith, the main man behind FACE TO FACE (another obvious reference) does an excellent job at the production controls. I've played this one alot, and I suspect I'll continue to do so. (RK)

(SideCho/1223 Wilshire Blvd #560/Santa Monica, CA 90403)



DECALS

"You (That's All We Ever Talk About)" 7"

Rockin' female-fronted power pop. Two great songs with almost too good a production. If this

sounded a little bit trashier, it would be glued to my turntable. (BAM)

(Fan Attic/PO Box 391494/Cambridge, MA 02139)

DEE DEE RAMONE

"Greatest and Latest" CD

This was utterly unnecessary. Who knows what DEE DEE was thinking? The guitar sounds awful, but that doesn't stop him from playing through sixteen RAMONES numbers. Dee Dee, we love ya, but are you gonna rock or not? (X)

(Conspiracymusic.com)

DEMONS

"Come Bursting Out" CD

This is a 6-song, lo-fi, "rock against music" EP from Gearhead. It's darker than NYC's HEARTDROPS, but not as sinister as the

MISFITS. The DEMONS do it up four piece, in greaser style. This disc is slammin', loud, and rippin'. Have I tempted you yet? (X) (Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)



DEMONS

"Riot Salvation" CD

This is good. The DEMONS sound so much like the NEW BOMB TURKS that it's scary. Crazy Swedes pumping out twelve tunes,

all sweaty rock'n'roll. It's been done before, but it's still enough to get me going.

Recommended. (MC)

(Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

DEVIANTS

"1967-96" CD

No thanx. Am I supposed to care about Mick Farren? Someone tell me what I'm supposed to know, because this '67-'96 collection taught me nothing. It's alot of B-movie garage novelty from what I can tell, but I bet some of those trendy types will lap it up. (X) (Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



THE DEVIL IS ELECTRIC

"This Means War" 7" EP

This reminds me a bit of DISCOUNT, without the intricate musicianship and with more of a political agenda. Strong lyrics, and a

fun record overall. (JC)

(Plan-it-x/5810 W. Willis Road/Georgetown, IN 47122)

DIALTONES/GASOLHEADS

split 7" EP

Two French bands offer up "Fresh Fruits for Rockin' Vegetables". The DIALTONES give us one solid punk'n'roller and one appealing heavily-reverbed instrumental; the GASOLHEADS are rawer, faster, and more frenetic, and their "It Sounds Like Headache" is the standout track. Nice sleeve. (JB) (Lollipop/6 tr. Monsegur/13016 Marseilles/FRANCE)

DICKIES

"Dawn of the Dickies" CD

Another mandatory DICKIES reissue, this time of their second LP (again with bonus

cuts). I actually prefer this follow-up to their debut, mainly because of the departure (R.I.P.) of their annoying keyboardist. Plus, it's filled with amazingly catchy originals (such as "Manny, Moe & Jack", "I'm Stuck in a Pagoda with Tricia Toyota", and "Fan Mail") and covers (like "Gigantor" and "Nights in White Satin"), all of which make one bust out laughing whilst pogoing all over the living room floor. (JB)
(www.captainoi.com)



DICKIES
"The Incredible Shrinking Dickies" CD

What needs to be said about this long-awaited reissue of the DICKIES' debut LP (plus bonus single tracks), other than that Captain Oi has once again demonstrated why it is one of the finest labels around. On this record the DICKIES, a much cleverer (if less original) West Coast version of the RAMONES, churn out a host of manic cartoon punk classics with memorable choruses, such as "You Drive Me Ape", "Hideous", "I'm OK, You're OK", and a host of hilarious covers (like "Paranoid", "Eve of Destruction", "Sounds of Silence", and "Banana Splits"). (JB)
(www.captainoi.com)



DIMSTORE HALOES
"Long Ride to Nowhere" CD

What we have here is the DIMSTORE HALOES third full-length album, a respectable collection of simple pop/punk tunes with stand-out lyrics, played enthusiastically by a sharp-dressed buncha trashy-pop-culture-fiends, that leaves many of their heavily-mascara'd counterparts in the dust, muttering about heroin and "teen queens from the porno-scene." I can personally identify with both the catchy "Wreck With Me" and the timely "Death Is A Star", and the album also boasts snazzy pix of the band at their brooding, matinee-idol best and at least three singalong anthems for "the kids" that rock like SOCIAL DISTORTION (!) covering PRETTY BOY FLOYD (!?!). (JDM)
(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)



DINGEES
"The Crucial Conspiracy" CD

These guys obviously love OP IVY, who in turn loved the CLASH. Both make a heavy-handed appearance on the influence list, but the DINGEES are more reggae than ska (although there's a healthy dose of punk rock as well). I don't know what to call them, but it's good, in a slightly different sort of way. (JER)
(Tooth & Nail/PO Box 12698/Seattle, WA 98111)



DIRTBOMBS
"Brucia i Cavi" 7" EP

Four brutally fuzzed-out songs from Mick Collins and company. "They Saved Einstein's Brain" and "Insecure...Me?" are among the best I've heard from this band. The remaining two cuts are wonderful noise. Anything this band does is worth a look. (MC)
(Hate/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Rome/ITALY)



DISCONTENT
"Who Killed Vinyl?" 7"

G.B.H.-style streetpunk that's very aggressive. I look forward to hearing Mo.re from this new band. (BAM)
(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

DIVIT/EVERYDAY VICTORY
split CD

DIVIT gets better and better with every release, and they were already one of the best bands going! These four new tracks move them farther from the punk world into the realm of the FOO FIGHTERS and WEEZER, while still maintaining their HOT WATER MUSIC-type changes. EVERYDAY VICTORY come through with ROCK (yes, that's supposed to be capitalized!), as in SAMIAM meet the LONELY KINGS. (BAM)
(Rise/2347 Oak Hill Road/Roseburg, OR 97470)

DOGS
"Fed Up!" CD

The DOGS were heirs of "kick ass" Detroit rock'n'roll outfits like the MC5, the UP, and

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the STOOGES who, after being influenced by the punk explosion of 1976, released two rockin' but long unavailable 7"ers. Dionysus has had the good sense to reissue their first

single, along with songs recorded live in 1977 at the Mabuhay and some unreleased stuff. All of it hits hard in a primitive mid-tempo fashion, though "Tuff Enuff", "Years Gone By", and "Dog in the Cathouse" (from 1987!) really stand out. (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

DOWN-N-OUTS
"Subterranean Beat Punk Blues" CD

Neo-60's garage punk from Denver. The DOWN-N-OUTS are clearly above average contemporary purveyors of this type of retro stuff, since they manage to generate a nice energetic, primitive sound and several of their distorted lead breaks really friggin' rip (as in "Feel Alright" and "Wreck My World"). Had they been able to play at the Purple Onion, a great time would have been had by all. (JB)
(Max Picou/PO Box 15/1294 Genthod/SWITZERLAND)

DONNAS
"Turn 21" CD

It's impossible not to love this new DONNAS long-player, which is filled with guitar-heavy girl punk and hard rock in the JOAN JETT vein. Not only do the DONNAS rawk like hell, they've also written great tunes (such as "Play My Game") and hilarious sex-oriented lyrics (as in "40 Boys in 40 Nights"). Imagine the late-period PANDORAS with a KISS-like production. (JB)
(Lookout/3264 Adeline Street/Berkeley, CA 94703)

DOZER
"Madre de Dios" CD

Another fuzzed-out space trippy, power-crunched SABBATH whoopee happy time, smoke up and rev up the cycle, blast through the cerebelum and rip through your cornea, twisted tale of beer soaked space debauchery that rocks you from your mushroom top to your bell bottoms. I love this stuff, and when it's done well (and this one is) you just gotta stand up and crush that

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can of Bud even though your girlfriend is hardly impressed. This will keep good company with your SONS OF OTIS and ORANGE GOBLIN discs. (MD)
(Man's Ruin/2626 3rd Street/San Francisco, CA 94107)



DRAGONS

"Woah Yeah/Wasted Days and Wasted Nights" 7"

The DRAGONS fucking rock! "Woah Yeah" has hooks out the ass and blazing guitars. This whole

single is a JOHNNY THUNDERS-fueled assault, and they're a great live band too. †Totally worth picking up. (MC)

(Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

DREAM DATES

"Moans on the Phone/Heartattack Rhythm" 7"

Fabulous 1979 recordings from the Canadian punk vaults. The DREAM DATES were glam punks from Hamilton, and both songs here have a super-raw and heavy guitar sound, piercing leads, snooty vocals, and a leather-and-lipstick vibe. Jeff Dahl would absolutely love this, and Mickey De Sadist of the great FORGOTTEN REBELS pens some aptly laudatory liner notes. Truly essential. (JB)
(Squelchtone/2 Bloor Street W., Suite 100/Toronto, Ontario M4W 3E2/CANADA)

DRUNK HORSE

"Tanning Salon" CD

These guys kick some major bootay. Hard-driving guitar and catchy riffs aplenty. Title track starts you off and really sets the tone for the rest of the album. Each track is really accessible and extremely well crafted, and just when you think they're going in some jazzy, laid back direction, they bring you back around with riff rock and superstar vocals. It's got that Man's Ruin quirk by not going by the numbers, which is always refreshing. (MD)

(Man's Ruin/2626 3rd Street/San Francisco, CA 94107)

DUMBSTRUCK

"If It Ain't Broke—Don't Fix It" EP

It's funny that I got this to review because I

had just been reading the "What Ever Happened to Ripcord" article in *Short, Fast and Loud* zine. DUMBSTRUCK feature ex-members of HERESY and RIPCORDER, and pretty much pick up where they left off. †If you haven't heard either of those bands, I'd categorize their music as being under the "Dis" grouping, although it's not quite like that. (AD)

(Blind Destruction/Box 29/82 Colston Street/Bristol BS1 5BB/ENGLAND)

DYSTOPIA

"Human=Garbage" LP

A vinyl reissue of DYSTOPIA, one of the best bands out of California nowadays. They've done numerous tours and have numerous releases out, but if you don't already know they're a power three-piece that play old NEUROSIS type hardcore. Even so, they also do their own thing: slow, grindy, sludgy, and dirty are all adjectives that come to mind when I think about this band. (AD)
(Life is Abuse/PO Box 20524/Oakland, CA 94620)



EAST BAY CHASERS

"Lock And Load/Blood Money" 7"

A hot rockin' new Bay Area band. Ripping guitars, snooty vocals, and two solid tunes. Really cool

artwork, too, so it's well worth picking up. (JC)

(Industrial Strength/2824 Reggatta Blvd/Richmond, CA 94804)



THE EIGHT BUCKS EXPERIMENT

"Payback" CD

Drunken and drugged bar-rock with some metal tendencies. Songs about

teen murders, drinking, and marijuana, which are always a hit with the kids, and there is even a brain damaged version of "Hey Joe". If any of this catches your fancy, go for it. (MC)

(Bluemoon, no address)

ELECTRIC HELLCLUB/TURBO A.C.'S split 7"

Two punk'n'roll bands doing their thing. Both bands feature up-front guitars and songs related to cars. Surprised? The ELECTRIC HELLCLUB tunes are stronger, if only because



of better production. There are other bands who do all this with more attitude and excitement, but this is still OK. (MC)

(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527

Dinslaken/GERMANY)



ELECTRIC PRUNES

"Lost Dreams" CD

For some odd reason I never realized just how great the ELECTRIC PRUNES were back in the 60s, even though I really loved "I Had

Too Much to Dream" and "Get Me to the World On Time". In recent months the entire PRUNES back catalog has been reissued, and this "greatest hits" disc put out by one of the band's members is amazingly good. The sound quality is top-notch, and it's chock full of terrific fuzzed-out psychedelic rockers. Mandatory. (JB)

(Birdman/1118 W. Magnolia Blvd/PO Box 208/Burbank, CA 91506)



ELEVENTEEN

"Everything I've Ever Wanted To Say" CD

I've never heard of these local Bay Area boys before, but they do a fine job of producing that melancholy

guitar-driven "my girl let me down" melodic hardcore stuff. GAMEFACE immediately spring to mind, or perhaps FACE TO FACE on a downer after having been betrayed by one too many young ladies. (RK)

(Frenetic/Archival Recordings/PO Box 640434/San Francisco, CA 94164)



END ON END

"Try Again" CD

Yet another speedy melodic hardcore band from southern California. These guys manage to offer a pleasantly snooty twist,

which makes them stand out a little from a very overpopulated genre. It's a relief to hear a band like this with a little drive, as opposed to the usual whining. (RK)

(This Guy/PO Box 25725/Los Angeles, CA 90025)

ENEMY MINE

"The Ice in Me" CD

I really hate it when labels send out promo copies of upcoming releases that don't have artwork, lyrics, or even contact info. What a waste. I suppose the label thinks the music will speak for itself, but in this case it doesn't. (AD)

(Up Records, no address on this stupid promo copy)

entertainment



ENTERTAINMENT

"Shake" 7" EP

Cool packaging, and it's nice to see some artistic quality in a 7" punk cover. ENTERTAINMENT are a pretty cool New Wave

band as well. Side A is more rockin' in the MURDER CITY DEVILS or LE SHOK vein, whereas side B is way deeper and has a cool sound more akin to the FALL or early JOHN CALE. (JC)

(Speed Nebraska/PO Box 3103/Omaha, NE 68103)

EVOLUTIONS

"She's So Mean/Band Aid" 7"

Super-raunchy garage punk from Wisconsin with an amazingly distorted sound. The EVOLUTIONS appear to be a 2-man trash guitar and noisy yelp outfit, not a full band. But they've got the r'n'r guitar riffs down pat, and their 45 sounds great to these ears, especially the A-side. (JB)

(Yakisakana/51 Rue Pierre Renaudel/76100 Rouen/France)

EXCEL

"Split Image" CD

EXCEL were one of the best metal skate bands of the 80's, hands down, and were from the same Venice scene that spawned bands like SUICIDAL TENDANCIES, NO MERCY and BEOWOLF. This reissue features EXCELLENT packaging, original demos, and cuts from the infamous "Welcome To Venice" LP, along with old photos and flyers collage. A must-have for any fan of metal/crossover which should keep PAPA ROACH cringing in their tour bus and wondering if they can still get their old jobs back at the Dairy Queen. (MD) (Rotten/www.rottenrecords.com)

FABULOUS DISASTER

"Put Out Or Get Out" CD

I love the lyrics, I love the attitude. This is like riot grrrrl light stuff, perfect for people



that are too cool to shop at the Hot Topic, yet still do. Imagine if Heather sang and did harmonies on all of the TEEN IDOLS songs. Great harmonies and vocals over aggro pop songs, with the usual Fat production that you kids can't seem to get enough of. (BAM)

(Pink & Black/PO Box 190516/San Francisco, CA 94119)

FACTION/2 CENTS WORTH

split 7"

One of my favorite bands, the FACTION, clock in with a decent live version of "Lets Get Cokes" off of their "Dark Room" 12". 2 CENTS WORTH do a live version of one of their songs that nobody's ever heard. Not absolutely necessary, but not bad at all. (BAM)

(AVD/8370 W. Cheyenne, PMB 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)

FAIRWEATHER

"If They Move...Kill Them" CD

Emo hardcore. Not the chugga chugga tough guy finger-pointing kind, unless it's the finger of shame and despair pointing inwards. This is a well-executed ten tracks of "the words are not enough to describe the pain I feel when you left me and I'm left alone missing you" type. Fans of that SoCal genre (think GAMEFACE and NO MOTIV) will dig this. (RK)

(Equal Vision/PO Box 14/Hudson, NY 12534)



FAKES

"So Fashionable It Hurts" 7" EP

Old-school punk from SoCal, and it's really good. "Sometimes" weds melodic but tough vocals,

roaring guitars, a medium tempo, and great choruses. "Grey Matter" is slower and lacks the choruses, while "All Used Up" is an uptempo track about a girl with STDs. (JB)

(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

FAT DAY

"Cats of the Wild" LP

FAT DAY are a really good, original live band. When I saw their "nerd gone bad" shtick at Gilman a few years ago, they had four mini-trampolines with sensors set up at strategic points, and the sensors were programmed to some kind of synthesizer so that when FAT

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DAY did their trampoline routine (the whole band, not just one guy), some type of musical noise emanated from the trampolines. But their album is too "experimental" and noisy for me. (AD)

(100% Breakfast/PO Box 381804/Cambridge, MA 02238)

FETISH

"Silver" CD

FETISH serve up thirteen slabs of mid-paced muscular rock with snotty vocals, and without any metallic pretensions or guitar solos. Driving and well-produced, this is miles away from the garage. It motors down highways previously toured by the likes of the WHO or SWEET, and they remind me a lot of CLOWNS FOR PROGRESS. (RK)

(Adeline/5245 College Avenue #318/Oakland, CA 94618)

FIGGS

"Sucking in Stereo" CD

How many truly great albums must a band make before the world finds out? The FIGGS are up to five, not including the live release when they backed GRAHAM PARKER for a tour. They keep it all true while handing you a COSTELLO/REPLACEMENTS/JAM/JOE JACKSON cocktail. I'm not afraid to be a fan, and the FIGGS are my recent cause. (X)

(Hearbox.com)



FLAKES

"Bip Bam Boom!" 7"

Russell Quan strikes again. Killer 60's-style garage rock with tons of snot and pop. This is certainly worth tracking down, as it will

provide you with a r'n'r fix while you're waiting for their full-length dosage. (BAM)

(Just Add Water/PO Box 420661/San Francisco, CA 94142)

FLATUS

"Blindsided" CD

Yet another melodic hardcore trio. While at times they fall into a BAD RELIGION groove, complete with some fine Brett-patented guitar solos, they inject enough driving rockage into the mix to stand out a little from the huge pack of their ilk. This one grew on

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me in a pleasant way. (RK)
(Black Pumpkin/PO Box 4377/River Edge, NJ 07661)



FOR THE LAST TIME
"People Ruin Everything" CD

A raging, angry "new" punk assault. Controlled melodic fury, with a sore throat. AVAIL and HOT

WATER MUSIC naturally spring to mind, but the comparison isn't far short of the mark. A keeper, for sure. (RK)
(Ruined Music/ruined69@aol.com)

FUCK YOU UPS

"Chicken Chow Fuck" 7" EP

Four ugly, fucked up, beer-swillin' songs with fistfuls of punk rock attitude. Not groundbreaking, but solid as a rock. (JC)
(Formula 13/PO Box 7385/Tempe, AZ 85231)



GASOLHEADS
"Sixty Second Swingers" CD

Trashed-out 77 punk from France. Not bad at all, and quite similar to fellow countrymen the TV

KILLERS. Eleven originals and a JOHNNY MOPED cover are all sung in accented English, which is always fun. (MC)
(Lollipop/7 imp. Monsegur/13016 Marseille/France)

GAZA STRIPPERS

"1000 Watt Confessions" CD

I don't know what's more appalling, Rick Sims going to Lookout Records or Lookout Records taking him in. Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do, but I know what they do: THEY ROCK! Sometimes Rick Sims' hymns wear thin too quickly, but "1000 Watt Confessions" is a sinful delight worth 1000 Hail Mary's. (X)
(Lookout/PO Box 11374/Berkeley, CA 94712)

GAZA STRIPPERS

"Electric Bible: The New Testament" CD

If you like the STRIPPERS, you're already gonna buy this disc and you won't be disappointed. The solos have a more

STOOGIE-like approach in the mix of things. It's another breakneck deliverance from the one they call Rick Sims (X)
(Triple X/www.triple-x.com)

GENTLEMEN

"Ladies and Gentlemen..." CD

Rock'n'Roll featuring Mike Gent from the FIGGS. They basically pollute the East Coast with their songwriting, but I was lucky enough to know someone who knows someone, and I got the rock. Once again Mike's integrity shines through, and with the GENTLEMEN the music is more STONES-y. (X)
(Hearbox/443 Albany Street/Boston, MA 02118)

GIZMOS

"1976/1977" LP

The "in" reissue band of the moment, and deservedly so. This is truly the stuff of genius. There is the LP version of the three classic GIZMOS EPs, along with a few outtakes. You get amazingly crude classics like "Muff Divin'", "Human Garbage Disposal", and "That's Cool (I Respect You More)". Totally essential, funny, and pure rock'n'roll that you'd be a fool to overlook. (MC)

(Hate/Vulcher Records/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Rome/ITALY)

GOLDEN ARMS

"Oriental Junk Sick" 7" EP

Totally trashed-out mid-tempo r'n'r from this Japanese band (formerly the REMAINS). "Diamond Head" is a nasty instrumental cover, and the three originals all feature reedy vocals and a NY DOLLS-inspired sound, in part courtesy of guest axe-slingers MR. RATBOY (on "Big Deal" and "Nasty Habit") and KEVIN K (on "Real Cool Cat"). This definitely rocks my world. (JB)
(Vicious Kitten/GPO Box 20/Canberra ACT 2601/AUSTRALIA)

GOLDEN GUINEAS/RANDY CAPTAIN DYNAMITE

split 7" EP

Jesus Christ, check this name out: RANDY CAPTAIN DYNAMITE & HIS WORLD FAMOUS LOAD HOODS. Anyway, they offer two decent "Moronophonic" trash rock jams. The GOLDEN GUINEAS sound excellent here, packing a hell of a guitar punch in their two punk blazers. Worth it for their side alone. (MC)

(Ken Rock/Fabrikskatan 39B, 3 tr/412 51

Goteborg/SWEDEN)



GOTOHELLS

"Rock'n'Roll America" CD

Produced by the extraordinary Steve Baise (ex-DEVIL DOGS). I been mates with these lads for over five years now, and they're

annually changing the gtr/vocal spot. But the music never fails, and I'd definitely recommend this disc to GLUCIFER and STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS fans. (X)
(Vagrant/2118 Wilshire Boulevard #361/Santa Monica, CA 90403)

GUIDED BY VOICES

"Isolation Drills" CD

I'm not an expert on GBV, unlike Mel Cheplowitz. I like them, but I've only owned "Vampire On Titus". The material on this is less of the noisy and more of the power pop. "Glad Girls" is probably my favorite tune, since it sounds like it could have been co-written with Alex Chilton. (JC)
(TVT/23 East 4th Street/New York, NY 10003)

HALFCKOCKED

"Occupation: RockStar" CD

Six members in this band, with three guitarists all playing the same chords? And does the drummer really play keyboards while he's drumming? The CD title seems appropriate anyway, and I can't wait to see how big label money affects them. At times HALFCKOCKED remind me of a Seattle band I loved, HAMMERBOX. (X)
(Curve of the Earth/1312 Boylston Street/Boston, MA 02215)

HAPPY CAMPERS

"Shades Of Grey" 12" EP

Straight "A" students in the school of PENNYWISE and SoCal skatepunk. Fast, melodic, and deftly played. The tunes are fairly catchy, but totally lacking in originality. These guys will probably be on the Warped tour next year. (JC)
(AVD/ 8370 W. Cheyenne/PMB 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)

HATED PRINCIPLES/CHACHI ON ACID
split 7" EP

HATED PRINCIPLES' three songs are pretty diverse. The first and third songs are brutal thrash that sound super static-y, while the second song reminds me of the GERMS.

CHACHI ON ACID cram no less than eight songs on their side of the split, and, as their name suggests, they're much sillier than HATED PRINCIPLES and have a slight STIKKY feel to them. (AD)
(DYI/PO Box 34/Listowel, Ontario N4W 3H2/CANADA)

HEADGRENADE Self-titled 10" EP

Super pissed-off punk/HC. The vocals reminded me of Jason from R.K.L. at times, but the music is very much like POISON IDEA. This isn't really my thing, but if you're into those bands you should check it out. (MC)
(702/PO Box 1204/Reno, NV 89504)

HEALTH HAZARD/SUFFER "Discography 93-96" CD

HEALTH HAZARD were an English band with a short existence that went on to reincarnate themselves in SUFFER. HEALTH HAZARD play super-speedy thrash with screaming-bloody-murder female vocals, and SUFFER merely pick up where they left off with a different singer. (AD)
(Prank/PO Box 410892/San Francisco, CA 94141)



HELLCOPTERS/FLAMING SIDEBURNS "White Trash Soul" split CD

It's pretty cool to hear the HELLCOPTERS cover SMOKEY ROBINSON, providing that you like SMOKEY ROBINSON. I have a feeling this was made by the band for the band. Then the FLAMING SIDEBURNS cover a HELLCOPTERS tune, which is also cool providing you like the HELLCOPTERS. (X)
(Bad Afro/Poste Restante/Frederiksberg Alle 6/DK- 1820 Frederiksberg C/DENMARK)

HELLSUCKERS

"Our Aim is to Run with the Devil" EP

You did a good job choosing a name to match your demon graphic, guys. The HELLSUCKERS deliver exactly what their name promises. This is a pretty good 4-song bandwagon CD, but let's be honest: there's a helluva lot of bands out there who are already in league with Satan. (X)

(57 Rue de la Mertzau/BP 3135/68063 Mulhouse Cedex/France)

HIVES

"Aka I-D-I-O-T" 10" EP

Boy, these Swedes sure knew how to rock even when they began. This 10" reissue contains faster and more straightforward garage punk (in the Rip Off label vein) than their recent 7" (reviewed below), but it's still pretty damned appealing. "Outsmarted" and "Mad Man" are the most tuneful tracks, and all by themselves they make this worth buying. (JB)
(Green Hall/Von Steuben-strasse 17/D-48043 Munster/GERMANY)

HIVES

"Veni Vidi Vicious" CD

Could you imagine what the ROMANTICS would have sounded like had the STOOGES lent 'em their balls? Charge that up and throw in a little of the DICKIES energy and I think you've got the HIVES. Pretty cool stuff that's a bit 60's-ish in spots, but definitely garagey and bright with just a touch of hell--RICHARD HELL. (X)
(Burning Heart/ 2798 Sunset Blvd/ Los Angeles, CA 90026)



HIVES

"Hate to Say I Told You So" 7" EP

Crunchy big guitar Swederock for the post-TURBONEGRO decade. But the HIVES have garage

punk origins and zero metal damage, relying instead on GODFATHERS-style power and tuneage of the type that's increasingly rare these days. The title track and "Die, All Right" are absolute monsters, and the unreleased cut is a rhythmic New Wave instrumental. A terrific disc. (JB)
(Green Hell/Von Steuben-strasse 17/D-48143 Munster/GERMANY)

HOMOPLASTIC

"Livin Bondage" 10"

Ripping Italian punk rock that sounds like something from the 70's, but they also have a song called "Trenchcoat Mafia" so it's obvious that this is pretty new. Awesome, highly-recommended lo-fi rumblings. My fave track is "Gary Gilmore in the Island Of Dr. Moreau", even though the "Gary Gilmore, Gary Gilmore" chant is about the only lyric I can make out on the whole track. (JC)

REVIEWS

(Ken Rock/Fabriksgratan 39, 3tr/412 51 Goteborg/SWEDEN)

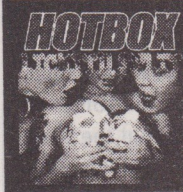


HONKY

"House of Good Tires" CD

Boring Texas fried rock'n'roll from an ex-BUTTHOLE SURFER. An obvious attempt to set themselves up as girl-chasing booze hounds.

"Sweet Honey Country Girl" and "Your Bottom's At the Top of My List" are kinda funny, but this is pretty much a waste. (MC)
(Hall of Records/PO Box 69281/West Hollywood, CA 90069)



HOTBOX

"Lickity Split" CD

I thought from the three half-nude girls on the cover that this was gonna suck, since with only a few exceptions bands that put

naked chicks on their covers do so because it's the only exciting part of the record). But it isn't half bad, which I guess means that it's also only half good. Basically, a couple of guys from R.K.L. and LAGWAGON are now playing enjoyable revved-up rock'n'roll with pop tendencies and strong female vocals. (JER)
(Telegraph/PO Box 2553/New York, NY 10009)



THE H.T. 3 s/t CD

Odd and occasionally appealing garage music from 1965 Minnesota, the brainchild of one Harvey Toberman (keyboardist and songwriter). It's not at all

heavy, fuzzed-out, or rockin'; at best it's atmospheric and moody (as in "You're Gonna Love" and "You're a Mystery to Me") or sounds like a precursor of JONATHAN RICHMAN (as in "Hey Little Girl", track 8). More often, it falls flat (as in the lightweight jam "Cool Breeze"). (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

SHITLIST

(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

HUNNS

"Tickets To Heaven" CD

When it has to do with Duane Peters, you pretty much know what it's gonna sound like. Not unlike the U.S. BOMBS, Duane Peters' HUNNS play more of that SoCal-sounding, catchy punk rock. The band features a couple guys from the PUSHERS and one guy from the HUMBERS, but they're not as good as the BOMBS themselves. (JAW)

(Disaster/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



HYBRIDS

"7 Hits from Space" CD EP

A spooky, rockin' 3-piece, featuring ex-ADRENALIN O.D. drummer Dave Scott, with an acute MISFITS influence that's especially

noticeable on the lead vocals and on tracks like "Abductee" and "Troubles with God". In the midst of the tongue-in-cheek horror and sci-fi themes, one can also discern some punkabilly chops. It's fun stuff, but the band still hasn't quite carved out its own identity. (JB)

(Hybrids/127 W. Fairbanks Avenue #420/Winter Park, FL 32789)



IDLE HANDS

"Building A Desert" CD

Somewhat akin to JAWBREAKER with female vocals, IDLE HANDS succeed in making emo a little more robust than is

usual for the navel-gazing genre. A crisp production and some meaty guitars certainly help. (RK)

(Trustkill/23 Farm Edge Lane/Tinton Falls, NJ 07724)



IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS

"The Essential Fucked Up Blues" CD

I was gonna pitch this disc in the trash without even giving it a spin, since I had no information to give you on the band. Now that I've listened to 'em, none of that matters. It's lo-fi, repetitive, and a bit bluesy, and if they only took themselves a bit more seriously, maybe I would too. (X)

IN/HUMANITY

"Violent Resignation: The Great American Teenage Suicide Rebellion, 1992-98" CD

This is a discography of South Carolina's IN/HUMANITY that includes both of their albums, myriad 7"s, and compilation tracks. They played wacked-out emo thrash with crazy, harsh vocals. Most, if not all, of the original releases that these songs came out on are long out of print, so this collection is perfect for those who didn't catch on when they were still around. (AD)

(Prank/PO Box 410892/San Francisco, CA 94141)

INDECISION

"Release the Cure" CD

Metal-charged hardcore that sounds like it belongs on Victory or Revelation, but rather than the baggy-shorts dumb thug thing that a lot of those bands have going on, this is an intelligent band with smart and passionate lyrics. The lyrics are very politically charged, and this is a band that's pissed and wants everyone to take action. The fact that their guitar player is a woman totally kicks ass, since there aren't enough women involved in hardcore, especially this genre. (AD)

(MIA/315 Church Street, 2nd Floor/New York, NY 10013)

JANIS FIGURE

"Damage Control" CD

Oh no ya don't, not in this magazine. Did ya really think that anyone here at *Hit List* would fall for a band whose members look like soap stars and sing about nothing? Don't quit your day jobs unless that involves playing music too. (X)

(Owned and Operated/PO Box 36/ Fort Collins, CO 80522)



J CHURCH

"Leni Riefenstahl's Tinder Box" 7" EP

It's about damn time. What happened to the J CHURCH that used to drop a release a week on the world? I

suspect that these songs will sound even better since this onslaught of releases is not occurring anymore. J CHURCH now includes JAWBREAKER's Adam Pfahler on the skins. (BAM)

(Love Boat/c/o Andrea Pomini/Casalla Postale 215/10064 Pinerolo (TO)/ITALY)

THE JOLT

s/t LP

The best neo-Mod record ever made, hands-down, one which blows away all the albums released by bigger name bands such as the JAM. The JOLT had everything a Mod band should, including loud slashing guitars, a tight rhythm section, good vocals, and songs chock full of memorable hooks and choruses. "I Can't Wait" is one of the greatest Mod anthems from any era, and "All I Can Do", "Decoyed", "In My Time", and "Mr. Radio Man" aren't far behind. There's not a duff cut on here, and the reissuers even had the good sense to add on the group's singles as bonus tracks. Essential. (JB)

(no label or address listed)

JUNCTION 18

"This Vicious Cycle" CD

JUNCTION 18 thank all the folk on this record "that have been nice to us".

I suspect I won't be earning their gratitude. It's not that they're bad, but rather that they walk that fine, blurry line between emo, pop and college rock. Even THREE DOORS DOWN and SR71 sometimes come up with the odd real catchy number, but an album's worth of this stuff? (RK)

(Fearless/13772 Goldenwest Street #545/Westminster, CA 92683)



KENJI

"Try This Broken Heart" CD

Seven (long) tracks of math rock hardcore, with some gruff vocals thrown in for good measure. A tortured, unrequited love can do

strange things to a man, obviously. If you like lots of melodic riffing, chops and changes, and meandering, long songs, with a vocalist who is obviously beside himself with inner torment, you'll commune with this one. (RK)

(24hr/154 Thompson Blvd./Ventura, CA 93001)



KERMIT'S FINGER/ZIPPO RAID

"They'll Play Anywhere" split 7" EP

A fun, jam-packed 8-song split 7". Both bands hate everything. KERMIT'S

FINGER make up for their name with five punk speedsters; ZIPPO RAID are a bit slower, but make good with three jaded numbers. Plenty of t'bang for your buck. (MC)

(Fan Attic/PO Box 391494/Cambridge, MA)

KIDS NEAR WATER
"Extended Player One"
 CD

Nothing new here, folks. The riffs are competent and well-executed, but there is nothing that

stands out to me as unique and the vocals leave a lot to be desired. Every song seems to follow the same formula and it isn't even metal, so I may have to go visit *Hit List* HQ with my knuckle-dusters. (MD)
 (Firefly/PO Box 30179/London E17 5FE/ENGLAND)



KLOPECS

"So Far, No Good" 7"

Fun high-energy and snotty pop punk. All four songs are winners, so if you like the early QUEERS or the GRUMPIES, you'll

positively eat this up. (BAM)
 (no label or address listed)

LAMONT

"Population 3" CD

My favorite term of endearment is "Dummy." Maybe it happened when that first PORTISHEAD CD broke. Then there's Fred Sanford's famous "Lamont, you big Dummy!" line. That's how this CD opens and that's why I love it, besides the fact that it rocks very clumsily and they cover the CULT. (X)
 (Curve of the Earth/1312 Boylston Street/Boston, MA 02115)

LARRY DIRTY

"Drug Abused" 7" EP

Down and, well, dirty blues/punk bashing. LARRY DIRTY (of the late, great DIRTYYS) lays down three primal tunes similar to a more aggressive OBLIVIANS. The songs are about being a Detroit druggie and looking for "Rocker Sluts". What more reason do you need? (MC)
 (Flying Bomb/PO Box 971038/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)

LEATHERFACE

"The Last" CD

A welcome release of LEATHERFACE's last record before the original split, with an additional eight tracks. Having released the perfect record ("Mush"), LEATHERFACE



understandably always struggled after that. "The Last" contains some of their best material ever, as well as some mediocre tracks, all drenched in their signature HUSKER

DU squares off to MOTÖRHEAD passion and power. Don't get me wrong, a mediocre LEATHERFACE is far superior to 99% of what passes for punk or rock these days. (RK)
 (BYO Records/www.byorecords.com)

LESSER OF TWO
 s/t CD

I can't believe this band is still together. This is a 100% D.I.Y. release from a trio of Bay Area thrashers. At times their music is almost melodic, and sometimes they go into some quirky breakdowns, but all that soon breaks into some ballistic thrash. Really cool and intricate hand-drawn artwork. †(AD)
 (Steve DeCaprio/PO Box 3603/Oakland, CA 94609)

LESS THAN JAKE

"Greased" CD

The last ska-punk band still standing covers nine songs from the "Grease" soundtrack. While this is a noble effort, it seems rushed, as if just doing the songs was enough for them. And I'm sure it will be enough for most fans of the band, although "Grease" fans are gonna be pissed or maybe just indifferent. (JER)
 (No Idea/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

LOAD

"Feel The Power" LP

Brutal, mostly uptempo punk rock, causing POISON IDEA and DR. KNOW to come to mind. †LOAD are not the most enlightened band around, but they play solid, heavy, and drunken fuck-you music. (JC)
 (702/PO Box 204/ Reno, NV 89504)

LOPEZ/FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM
 split 7"

Another good release from Dirtnap. LOPEZ check in with two fast songs, complete with snotty yelling and cool leads. The FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM sound great on their MC5-influenced "I Got a Line on You". This is a total winner. (MC)
 (Dirtnap/PO Box 21249/Seattle, WA 98111)

REVIEWS

LOST SOUNDS



LOST SOUNDS

"1+1=Nothing" 7" EP

Empty Records are now done with their legal battles and are back to concentrating on putting out records (congratulations,

fo(ks). They come back up with a hell of a 7" that throbs with an intense, brooding melancholy bordering on dementia and seems to draw inspiration from bands like WIRE, early SIOUXSIE, and PUBLIC IMAGE. (JC)
 (Empty/PO Box 12034/Seattle, WA 98102)

THE LOT SIX

"Anniversary" 7" EP

In my opinion this is a record that looks way cooler than it sounds. But then I'm not a fan of this polished and lightly-played



emo/indie rock. They seem proficient enough, so if you like that style you might want to check this out. (JC)
 (Espo/PO Box 63/Allston, MA 02134)

LOWER CLASS BRATS

"The Plot Sickens" CD

More of the same powerful clockwork punk and Oi music the BRATS are known for. My only complaint is that there seem to be a bunch of already-released (and possibly re-recorded) songs on this CD. Either way, their shit rocks--check out "Insult To Injury" for the BRATS' excellent cover of MAD PARADE's "Sex And Violence". Achtung, Deutschland, the BRATS are heading your way soon. (JAW)
 (Punkcore/PO Box 916/Middle Island, NY 11953)

MAKERS

"Tiger of the Night/Miss Fay Regrets" 7"

This single is much more "rawk" than anything else I've heard by the MAKERS. That said, this is still great, driving rock'n'roll with plenty of trash to go around. They might not measure up to their past greatness, but they can still rock harder than most. (MC)
 (Sub Pop/PO Box 20465/Seattle, WA 98102)

SHITLIST

THE MALCONTENTS



LIQUOR STORE E.P.

MALCONTENTS

"Liquor Store" 7" EP

Not nearly as punk as the packaging suggests. This record reminds me a lot of the REPLACEMENTS. It's pretty fucking good, with

real solid songwriting and heartfelt playing. This label seems to have zero budget, making this record super limited (mine is #12 of 110). (JC)
(Skull/3770 Vinton Avenue #23/Los Angeles, CA 90034)

MARILYN MANSON

"Holywood" CD

As far as I'm concerned, this is the album MANSON should have made three albums ago before proceeding to rip off every one of my icons. Building soft, croaky verses into slamming loud, desperate choruses has become the MANSON trademark, and on "Holywood" he does it better than ever. I guess he ran out of heroes to nick from and began copying himself. (X)
(some major label)

MASTER MECHANIC



MASTER MECHANIC

"Oo-tay/I Wanna Kiss You" 7"

Fairly plodding sludge rock with female vocals. Pretty unmemorable, but not so annoying that I would

actually call it bad. (JC)
(Master Mechanic/PO Box 4247/Pittsburgh, PA 15203)

MAZINGA/SEX SEX SEX

split 7" EP

This EP boasts a multicolored sleeve with horror themes, zombie pics, devil babes, and Satan hand signals. That generally means loud, alcohol-fueled, hard rockin' stuff, which is just what one can find here. MAZINGA are a punky outfit with sung (not shouted) vocals from Ann Arbor, my old haunt, whereas SEX SEX SEX is a slightly more rawkin' and metallic but no less punky group from Sweden who do a G.G. ALLIN cover. (JB)
(Spasthmatic/PO Box 20913/Mesa, AZ 85277)

ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES

"Shannon" 7"

I thought I understood the theory behind this 7" series, but now I guess I don't. Before, it was always an album track, with an exclusive B-side by the same artist, and it sold out immediately. This 7" contains two DEL SHANNON songs ("Runaway" and "Hats Off to Larry"), but they are both on the record. Either way, it still rocks and it still sold out. (BAM)
(BYO/PO Box 67A64/Los Angeles, CA 90067)

THE MEDIA CONNECTION

"The Action Noise" CD

Fuzzy, thick guitar blended with latent psychedelia. The fantasy side has a DANZIG feel to it, especially the faster songs. A lot of this is dream-soaked and Gothic, but nothing a little LSD couldn't employ. (X)
(Media Connection/242 Lexington Street #1/East Boston, MA 02128)



MELVINS

"Electroretard" CD

These guys can do no wrong. At first I was a little curious about why they would put out an album with half of the tracks

being re-worked older toons, but they really twisted them up and they go great with the new ones, even though half of the new ones are covers. With PINK FLOYD's "Interstellar Overdrive" and a COWS cover ("Missing"), they keep it different and flowing. Non-stop lunacy. (MD)
(Man's Ruin/2626 3rd Street/San Francisco, CA 94107)

MERRICK

"An Album For Raymond" CD

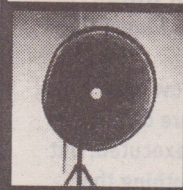
The debut full-length from one of the East Bay's most promising young bands. Their sound comes off as a more pop-oriented SAMIAM. Ten well-crafted songs, all having the appropriate amount of power and pop. Nowhere to go but up. (MC)
(www.deafiniterecords.com)

LA MERMA

"Ciudad Fronteriza" CD

LA MERMA set themselves apart from the melodic punk pack with this surprisingly good CD. The fact that the vocals are sung in Spanish really helps. Anything that breaks the mold in this crowded (and boring) genre is something of a victory. (MC)

(Hooiligan/ www.geocities.com/la_merma)



MEZZANINE~C14

s/t CD

MEZZANINE~C14 give us ten tracks heavily influenced by Dischord bands like JAWBOX. The production is more stripped

down and crunchy than most of the releases of this type, but the drive is there. If you're a fan of this sound, you might want to seek this out. (MC)

(Break Even/PO Box 42469/Philidelphia, PA 19101)

MIDGET HAND JOB

"Midnight Snack Break at the Poodle Factory" CD

Genius comes in different shapes and sizes. This time, genius cums from a CIRCLE JERK. Here, bad trailer park poetry is set against a backdrop of Hee Haw jazz. It's really not necessary, but then again neither is a midget handjob. (X)
(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

MIGHTY IONS

"Face Rakin' Rock" CD

Unlike at those other rock zines, we at *Hit List* care enough to actually listen through the entire disc before giving you, the reader, our humble perceptions. Some of us even listen a second time in shuffle mode. A CD such as this, containing 24 tracks, doesn't usually get its fair shake. This comes with a fairly uninformative booklet, but I suggest that you VIKINGS fans see where those Swedes got their strut. (X)

(Dino/PO Box 802/Northampton, MA 01061)



MILHOUSE U.S.A./RIFF RANDALS

"Nevergirlboy" split 7" EP

Boy howdy, these bands might even be worth driving to Sacramento for. Cool record, cool bands.

The RIFF RANDALS play punked out stuff with a strong female singer similar to the LOUDMOUTHS, but are a bit more melodic. MILHOUSE U.S.A. are noisier and thrashier, and also have the best song title in "Pussy Is Gay". (JC)
(Sacramento/no address)

REVIEWS



THE MISSING 23RD

"Ctrl+Alt-Del" CD

Good hardcore that gets all the sweatshirt crowd practicing karate in the pit. I saw them play recently, and this CD does a good

job of capturing the band's live energy. This doesn't really have the macho vibe that most hardcore does these days, which is a good thing. (MC)

(Sessions/15 Janis Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)

MISTREATERS

"Grab Them Cakes" CD

All the way from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I can't remember the last time that our nation's brew capitol was so pissed off. Track 2 had the closest thing to a hook, but overall it's lo-fi at its grittiest. Don't say I didn't warn ya. (X)

(Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA. 20195)

MIXELPRICKS

"Bitter?" CD

Pretty strong, if standard, starry-eyed pop punk from the Midwest. Every once in awhile, like on "Christy" and "The Girl", these kids really rock, but more often they come off sounding generic despite some pretty strong vocals and serious songwriting potential. I think that the next record could be really great, but they're not there yet. (JER)

(Murk-Ta/PO Box 4663/Lafayette, IN 47903)

MOB 47

"Garanterat Mangel" LP

37 songs on this 12", which appears to be a discography that spans the band's entire history and various lineups. It's a great sampler, and I'm glad that Distortion decided to put this out since MOB 47's stuff is really hard to find. If you're curious as to why people always rave about Swedish hardcore, pick this up so you can be in on it. (AD)

(Distortion/Box 129/SE-401 22 Gothenburg/SWEDEN)

MOLOTOW SODA

"Eigenurin" LP

Strike 1 is the stupid band name. Strike 2 is the stupid cover that looks just like a cartoon version of that retarded BLINK 182 album. Strike 3 is the boring generic skatepunk music. You're outta there, dudes. (JC)

(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

MOLOTOW SODA

"Keine Traume" LP

German melodic punk from 1989. It's refreshing to hear this brand of punk from a time and place where it wasn't yet boring. The music is great, and is similar to old BAD RELIGION. If you like WIZO or any other German punk from this era, this is for you. (MC)

(Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

MOMMIE'S FRIEND

"Spilt Milk" CD

Basic East Bay punk from MOMMIE'S FRIEND, featuring songs about being anti-social, booze, meat, and hate. They cover FANG, which is also a good reference point for their sound. An entertaining, shit-talking live band too. (MC)

(Food Stamp, no address listed)

MOORAT FINGERS

"I Hate To Love You" 7"

This is great. It's aggressive '77- style punk that at times almost sounds like a drunk(er) SEX PISTOLS. Also features a cool trashed-out recording and great vocals. (BAM)

(no label or address listed)

MOTHER SUPERIOR

s/t CD

These guys reminded me of 1970's Caveman rock right from the get-go. If that's your dimebag and you're 40 and you love BAD COMPANY, MONTROSE, and KISS, take a token. Me, I don't smoke. (X)

(Triple X Records/www.triple-x.com)

MR T EXPERIENCE

"The Miracle Of Shame" CD EP

Further proof--if you needed more than the last 2 full-lengths--that MR T have definitely ditched the punk in their pop-punk. At their best, these five tracks exhibit some reasonable sugary pop, Hammond organ and all. At its worst, this is bland, insipid nothingness. The "End Of the Ramones" indeed! (RK)

(Lookout/PO Box 11374/Berkeley, CA 94712)

MUSHUGANAS

"Including Heartbreak 98" CD

Rockin' cool shit from Chicago that sounds like it should be on Get Hip or Estrus. I don't



it out, y'all. (JER)

(Myshuganas/PO Box 802/Downers Grove, IL 60615)

MZ. PAK MAN

"Oh Shit, It's Mz. Pak Man" CD

NYC all-girl band whose sound falls somewhere in between BRATMOBILE and the first DONNAS album. The songs are all mid-tempo, 1-2-3-4 punk with a good amount of slop. I wasn't that impressed, but if you're into girl groups, give it a go. (MC)

(Slutfish Worldwide/327 Bedford Ave #A2/Brooklyn, NY 11211)

NAPALM DEATH

"Leaders Not Followers" CD EP

This is an EP with six songs that NAPALM DEATH decided to cover. The RAW POWER and DEAD KENNEDYS covers are terrible. The other four bands they've covered on here are early 80's speedmetal bands, and I just don't know enough about them to know if these cover versions are good. (AD)

(Relapse/PO Box 2060/Upper Darby, PA 19082)

NASTY ON

"Lester Bangs" CD EP

I don't know anything about these guys, but their CD kicks ass. The NASTY ON give us six great songs similar to those of the BLACK HALOS. Plus, any band that uses the word "gimme" and worships Lester Bangs is A-OK in my book. Gimme more! (MC)

(Stutter/www.thenastyon.com)



NATION OF ULYSSES

"The Embassy Tapes" CD

What can I say about the NATION? This was recorded on a 4-track, so it has a real good feel to it and at times even sounds like a live

recording. This isn't their best album, but it's very good and it brings back memories. (JS)

(Dischord/3819 Beecher Street NW/Washington, DC 20007)

SHITLIST

NEW CITY ROCKS



NEW CITY ROCKS

"Milano 2000" 7" EP

Superior 77-style punk rock with gravelly vocals that often have a pronounced Oi inflection. The production is nice and raw, and the

songs all have plenty of hooks and some singalong back-up vocals (especially "Bravo Ragazzo" and "Your World"). "100% Politically Incorrect", the cover boasts, and it's worth going out of your way for. (JB) (barracuda.rec@libero.it)

THE NEW LOWS

s/t CD

You wanted the best...but they couldn't make it. I'm glad to report John is still barking like DANZIG, Chris is still slammin' them skins, and Rob's bass can never be loud enough. It's dark, riffy, raw, and 70's STOOGEY, so HEADCOATS and CRAMPS fans should take note. The best tracks are #2, 6, 7, and 10. (X) (The New Lows/509 Duboce Street/San Francisco, CA 94117)



NIBLICK HENBLANE

"Go Away" CD

Traditionally, Oi (for want of a better stupid generic label) has turned out some classic melodic, driving punk bands. Think of the

power, and goddamn tunes no less, of COCK SPARRER or PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES. NIBLICK sound like they are approaching such exalted heights on this release, given its potent mix of guts, harmony, and energy. Only the first two tracks disappoint. (RK) (TKO Records/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

NO-TALENTS

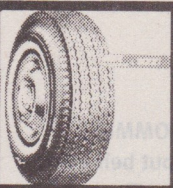
"Hello World!" 7" EP

This is a repressing of a 3-song EP released a few years back, with a bonus COCKNEY REJECTS ("Heaùbangers") cover tacked on. Nothing earth-shaking, but these Frenchies bring enough cool female vocals and punk crunch to keep most listeners interested. †Fun band, decent record. (MC) (Hate/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Rome ITALY)

THE NUMBERS

"Music Design" 10" EP

This record fucking rocks, pure and simple. After their great debut single on Hostage, the NUMBERS follow up with this powerful 10" slab. All six songs on here rock like no tomorrow in the same vein as SMOGTOWN and the STITCHES. Can't wait for more. (MC) (Dead Beat/PO Box 288/Los Angeles, CA 90078)



OHNO EXPRESS/SOON

split CD

OHNO EXPRESS is pretty standard (i.e., boring) emo pop-punk, and SOON kind of sound like LEATHERFACE (not enough to make me

like them, just enough to make me think "Hey, this kinda sounds like LEATHERFACE.") Nice package design, but neither band did much for me. (JER) (Crackle/PO Box 7/otley, LS21 1YB/ENGLAND)



ONE MAN SHOW LIVE

"It Don't Matter" 7" EP

Awkward name, rockin' band. A junky, slash, thrash recording that borders on the obscene. The track "It Don't Matter" pleases me

to no end with its chunky swagger and rasped vocals, a nice STRANGLERS take-off for the cover art completes the package. (JC) (Call And Response/1526 Westerly Terrace #4/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

ONE LAST THING

"The Foster Portfolio" CD

This thing is as much FUGAZI as it is TEXAS IS THE REASON. As ugly in some parts as it is pretty in others, and I don't mean ugly in a bad way. Well-calculated math rock bordering on emo, blasting into full-on rage rock. Well worth picking up. (BAM) (Rise/2347 Oak Hill Road/Roseburgh, OR 97470)

ONE TIME ANGELS

"To All Trains" 7"

The ONE TIME ANGELS feature members of notables SCREW 32 and BLACK CAT MUSIC, and show us what they're made of with this debut. "Mercury" is great tune featuring all the trademarks of East Bay punk, while the flip is a great cover of "Soldier's Requiem"

by NAKED RAYGUN. Finally, another local band to be excited about. (MC) (Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)

OPERATOR:GENERATOR

"Polar Fleet" CD

These guys have an awesome sound and impeccable songwriting. Space crunch with haunting fade vocals, ripping guitar, and pounding bass and drums takes you through brilliantly-layered episodes of sound. Inspirational, heavy, and fresh, this one cannot disappoint even someone as hard to please as myself. (MD) (Man's Ruin/2626 3rd Street/San Francisco, CA 94107)

THE OTHERS

"Magic Bullet Fan CD Series, vol. 2" CD EP

I was told this CD rocks. While it is true that the first song is a rocker, the following two tracks provide little insight into the OTHERS. The jury is out until I hear a full-length or catch them live, because right now I can't even tell you what kind of music they play. The chances are that they themselves aren't sure. (X) (Magic Bullet/PO Box 6337/Woodbridge, VA 22195)



OVER MY DEAD BODY

"No Runners" CD

Fuck me, these guys are going to be goddamn straight till they bloody well die. And if you're a friend of theirs, they'll

always be there (unless you are no longer straight, presumably, then they'll have to kill you). In between all the youthful posturings, there's a fair representation of the various straight edge styles--straight (pardon the pun) MINOR THREAT stuff, some breakdowns (in between handing out beatdowns, of course), and lots of anger--and also FAITH and SEX PISTOLS covers. (RK) (Indecision/PO Box 5781/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)



OXYMORON

"Best Before 2000" enhanced CD

A welcome retrospective collection of all the OXYMORON 7"ers up through 1999, most of

which are now out-of-print collector's items. This is driving, guitar-heavy Oi-inspired punk

with good hooks and singalong bits that both the skins and the spikey-headed and mohawked punks should go wild over. One listen to "Dead End Generation" should win you over, not to mention provide a model for today's often tepid streetpunk groups to follow. (JB)

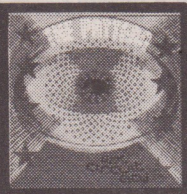
(Knock-Out/www.knock-out.de)

A PLANET FOR TEXAS

"You Can Still Rock In America" CD

Pretty boring melodic pop-punk stuff. †It's played well, but this genre suffers from serious overkill. †The cover art features naked chicks, cows, and electrical towers. Yay! (MC)

(Diaphragm/2480 Indianola Avenue/Columbus, OH 43202)

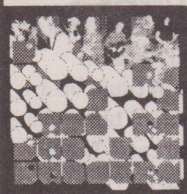


THE PATTERN

"Wet Circuit City" 7"

This new Bay Area band features Chrissier (the owner of Lookout Records), Jason Rosenburgh (ex-ST. JAMES

INFIRMARY), the drummer from BLACKFORK, and probably someone else worth mentioning, and Mike Gearhead dubs them the American HELLACOPTERS. I hear more of a trashed-out early riff-rock feel, as if the KINKS were covering SABBATH songs. (BAM) (Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)



THE PATTERN

"Non-Stop" 7"

Gearhead Records is coming out of the gate at full speed and, as it turns out, full blast. Another great 7" by the PATTERN,

featuring two more killer tracks of trashed-out riff rock. (BAM) (Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

PEEPS CD

Look through the PEEPS liner notes and you'll notice that they have all the right answers, though if someone's really cool they don't spend so much time telling you how cool they are. Anyways, their music is treading on DONNAS territory, and the PEEPS would fit in if they opened for the RICHMOND SLUTS. Out of the dozen cuts in the crate, I pick tracks 5 and 6 for you to chew. (X)

(Sympathy for the Record Industry)

PETROL

"Play It Mean to Keep 'Em Keen" CD

If OASIS knew how to rock and listened to CHEAP TRICK, E.L.O., or QUEEN, it would approximate this band. PETROL's shows are always packed with pretty ladies, and where the gals go the guys are sure to... sniff. This 4-song EP includes the long-awaited Shaw brothers' radio-ready ballad "Chopper." If the majors don't bite on this one, I've got one they can bite on. (X) (www.petrolsf.com)

PHUZZ

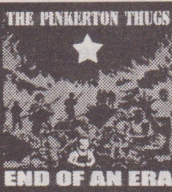
"American Pop" CD



From the description on the back, you'd think that these guys are the second coming of the BEATLES. While it's true that this record does indeed have

some great pop hooks and catchy choruses, they're all overshadowed by mediocre vocals and cliched lyrics. There is some decent power pop-punk on this disc, but I can't make it through any song without rolling my eyes. (JER)

(Beach/1230 Market Street/PMB 135/San Francisco, CA 94102)



PINKERTON THUGS

"End Of An Era" CD

This Boston band plays rather "nice", melodic, yet heartfelt punk rock which would again score well with the DROPKICK MURPHY's

ilk of puke (I mean, punk) rockers. (One of these guys even went on to play in the DROPKICKS, which tells you something.) Not bad, just not for me. (JAW) (Go-Kart/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/New York, NY 10012)

PLASMATICS

"Coup D'Etat" CD

Finally in re-release from the illustrious Razor and Tie label, though as a kid I was really disappointed with this PLASMATICS album. Their previous "Metal Priestess" EP warned that it was time for the band to roll with the market, give up the punk, and try their leather clad fists at metal. It's a damn good thing that Wendy's vocals were always so convincing, and now "Coup D'Etat" sounds better than I recalled. Thank

REVIEWS

you, Wendy! R.I.P. (X)

(Razor & Tie/PO Box 585, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)



POETS

"Scotland's No. 1 Group" CD

A bootleg of one of the finest little-known beat groups of the 60s. An official reissue seems

unlikely, since they put out records on so many different labels, so all we have is this unofficial release that's seriously marred in terms of sound quality (especially the first five demo tracks, which are otherwise great). Even so, the quality of the songs shines through, both on their uptempo beatpunk cuts (like "Miss Queen Bee") and on their moody Mersey sides (like "This Woman Mine"). (JB)

(Dynovax, no address listed)

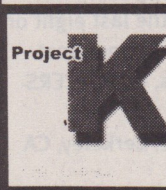


PRIMITIVES

"Maladjusted" CD

A terrific-sounding reissue of all the mid-60's PRIMITIVES releases, including their rare French EP and their Italian LP. They

started out as an extraordinarily tough-sounding British R&B outfit, as exemplified by killer tracks like "Let Them Tell" and "You Said". But things began to go downhill when they replaced their original lead singer with heartthrob Mal Ryder, who moved them in a more commercial direction and boasted a horrible "soulful", almost-proto metal vocal style that almost single-handedly ruined otherwise amazing, guitar-wowin' freakbeat tracks like "Oh Mary" and "Johnny No". (JB) (SanctuaryA29 Barwell Business Park/Leatherhead Road/Chessington, Surrey KT9 2NY/ENGLAND)



PROJECT K

"Testing Underway" CD

College radio pop-rock that really didn't do anything for me. It has solid songwriting and alternating male/female vocals, but it

comes across as little more than background music. All in all, pretty blah. (MC) (www.bongload.com)

SHITLIST

SY-9

"From S.T.P. to Eternity" CD

Pretty simplistic 1-2, 1-2 Australian punk with MISFITS and QUEERS tendencies. Decent, but nothing to write home about. I keep hearing all these great things about the Amp label, and maybe I've just been listening to the wrong records, but I have yet to see what's so cool about them. (JER)
(Amp/92 Kenilworth Avenue/South Hampton, Ontario L8K 2S9/CANADA)



Q AND NOT U

"No Kill No Beep Beep" CD

This record is amazing. It's very creative, and has very cool lyrics. I'm not sure why, but at times it brings CIRCUS LUPUS to mind.

There is not a weak song on here, since it rocks from start to finish. I bet you can't listen to it just once. (JS)
(Dischord/3819 Beecher Street NW/Washington, DC 20007)



QUINTRON

"Umased Organ Light-Year of Infinity Man" CD

Mr. QUINTRON, organ grinder at your service, pumps out another rock'n'roll party record on

the great Bulb label. Probably best known in for his work with the OBLIVIANS, QUINTRON knows how to get you movin'. I'd love to walk into a bar and see this guy doing his thing. (MC)
(Bulb/ www.bulbrecords.com)

QUEERS

"Today" CD

This is the best damn thing the QUEERS have released since "Don't Back Down". Everything that they released on Hopeless was sub-par, and a lot of people say these guys have been riding on "Love Songs For The Retarded" for the last eight or so years, but I think they have some great stuff left in 'em. Fear not, kids, the QUEERS don't suck just yet. (JER)
(Lookout/3264 Adeline Street/Berkeley, CA 94703)

RACHEL STAMP

"Stampax" CD

They're not the latest to blend late 80's metal with early 80's New Wave, but I bet they wish they were the first. I don't think the songs are as bad as the approach, and one might draw comparisons with later COOPER and MISSING PERSONS. STAMP do what they do well, I just don't see who they can do it for. (X)

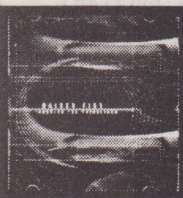
(RachelStamp/PO Box 16432/London W6 OZQ/ENGLAND)

RAGING SLAB

"The Dealer" CD

Southern rock ragers RAGING SLAB serve up a heaping plate of gritty grits with "The Dealer" which is very reminiscent of HUMBLE PIE and has tinges of BROTHER CANE. It ain't metal, but rather down-home, Jack-swillin', barbeque up anything that ain't moving, light up a red, and slap your ol' lady on the fanny, porch-swingin' good time rock and roll. Chuggin' bluesy riffs and smoldering vocals create a perfect smokey flavor. (MD)

(Tee Pee/PO Box 20307/New York, NY 10009)



RAISED FIST

"Ignoring The Guidelines" CD

Not normally my cup of herbal tea, but these guys do the modern, stomping, metallic hardcore thing real

good. Howling vocals, which don't tend to grate overly, all backed up with some punchy, precise, and raging music. All the requisite stops, starts, tempo changes, and chugga chugga bits are here, so in the old days this would probably have been called Victory-style hardcore. (RK)
(Burning Heart/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

RATOS DE PORÃO

"Sistemados pelo Crucifa" CD

Ratos de Porão are hardcore legends from Brazil who've been at it since the early 1980's. This is a re-recorded version of the original "Sistemados Pelo Crucifa" that was first released in 1983 and was the first hardcore album from South America. This is an awesome record that everyone should pick up, at the very least just to learn and listen to some punk history. (AD)
(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

REACT

"Deus Ex Machina" CD

More good stuff from the East Coast. This is totally awesome in-your-face hardcore punk, complete with dual female/male vocals and politically-inspired lyrics, which sounds like a speeded-up version of AUS ROTTEN mixed with a healthy dose of NAUSEA. The drummer is really good, and I'll bet the black denim and patches crowd will love this release. (AD)
(13th Floor/PO Box 1502/New Haven, CT 06511)

REACT/GREED

split 7" EP

What a great split! REACT give up two songs of politically-charged hardcore, and Sweden's GREED give up four tracks of Swedish crustcore. Both bands set off each other well. †(AD)
(13th Floor/PO Box 1502/New Haven, CT 06511)

RED PLANET

"Revolution 33" CD

RED PLANET is a decent band when they're able to stop patting themselves on the back long enough to play. Despite the quirky CARS keyboard patches, this CD is pretty damn good in a TSAR-like poppy fashion. I guess I just don't like what they stand for. (X)
(Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)



RED PLANET

"Let's Get Ripped" 7"

This band rules. It includes an original A-side (I believe) that could be a long lost BOYS tune, and is a hit in any case. The B-

side is a cover of the KENNEDYS "Too Drunk To Fuck". (BAM)
(Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

LOU REED

"All Tomorrow's Dance Parties" 7" EP

The future VELVET UNDERGROUND frontman's earliest recordings. This EP contains two greasy, semi-doo-wop 1958 laments for J.D.'s from the SHADES/JADES, featuring LOU and a couple of friends, plus two similar 1962 solo efforts by LEWIS REED and some session men. All of them are surprisingly good, especially the DION-like "So Blue" and "Your Love". How does Norton come up with this amazing stuff? (JB)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)

THE REMAINZ

"Live in N.Y.C." CD

This isn't fair. It's Marky and DeeDee Ramone ripping thru 21 RAMONES tunes live with Barbara Zampini. I'm not really gonna give this a bad review, since it's got great energy and is recorded pretty well. (X)
(Pinhead/Casilla de Correo 1297/CP 1000/Buenos Aires/ARGENTINA)

REVOLVERS

s/t CD

They're from Kansas City alright. Until now I had only a vague recollection of a nightmare evening I once spent in KC, when I saw shitty band after shitty band. Perhaps one of them was the REVOLVERS, but if not they all sounded exactly like this. Someone please make the bad people stop! (X)
(PO Box 413824/Kansas City, MO 64141)



THE RITCHIE WHITES

"Stop Me Before I Kill Again/Walk Away" 7"

Yeah, it's on Rapid Pulse and it's punk'n'roll. On the A-side, these Texas lads do a mid-tempo number with a slightly glammy lead/bridge, but the flipside is a much more memorable song due to its emotive lead singing and its irresistible background vocals on the chorus. (JB)
(Rapid Pulse/PO Box 5075/Milford, CT 06460)

ROCKET CITY RIOT

"We Name The Guilty Men" CD

Standard rock'n'roll with gruff vocals that in general fails to impress. I like the name, though. (JER)
(Twenty Stone Blatt/no address listed)

ROCK AND ROLL ADVENTURE KIDS

s/t 7" EP

Total garage punk mayhem that captures the excitement of any drunken rocker party. †These three dorks know how trash it up nice and raw. An ultra lo-fi live recording, budget cover art, blank labels, the whole nine yards. One of the best records I've come across in a while. Find this at all costs. (MC)
(Soul Not Style/email: rocknrolladventurekids@hotmail.com)

ROCKS/LOUDMOUTHS

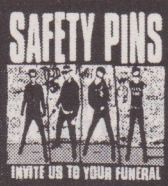
split 7" EP

Australia's late 70's punk vets the ROCKS pump out two more of the tight, punchy p-rock blasts that they've long been famous for, which is always a good thing. As usual the LOUDMOUTHS display a dirty-sounding guitar attack and bad-ass female vocals, and the songs here are both real good garage punkers (though they've been playing too fast live in recent months). (JB)
(702/PO Box 204/Reno, NV 89504)

RUIDO/INSULT

split 7"

RUIDO are an awesome, underrated band from the Los Angeles area who play hardcore punk in the LOS CRUDOS vein, complete with Spanish lyrics. INSULT also play hardcore, but with quite possibly some of the stupidest lyrics I've ever read. †(AD)
(Know/PO Box 90579/Long Beach, CA 90809)



SAFETY PINS

"Invite Us to Your Funeral" CD

Amped-up punk'n'roll from one of Spain's finest group of retrobates. The guitars are loud, the sound is heavy, the vocals are gruff, and there are some standout songs, but the production doesn't quite match the music, being more suited to HELLACOPTERS-style rawk than to '77 punk. (JB)
(Dead Beat/PO Box 283/Los Angeles, CA 90078)

SAN GERONIMO

s/t CD EP

SAN GERONIMO features members of LIFETIME, DROWNINGMAN and JETS TO BRAZIL, so it looks as though the Bay Area has yet another super-group on its hands. The first fruit of this union is a CD EP that will have any fan of the above-mentioned bands humming along in no time. (MC)
(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)



SCARED OF CHAKA

"Seven Stories Tall" CD

S.O.C. is one of those rare bands whose releases I pick up no matter what. This is a collection of S.O.C.'s singles, plus some decent-sounding live songs. There are over

REVIEWS

30 tracks on this disc, but most are in the 90 second range. Great, great stuff from a truly awesome band. (JER)
(702/PO Box 204/Reno, NV 89504)



SCARED OF CHAKA/FATAL FLYING GUILLOTEENS

split 7"

A very cool record. S.O.C. clock in heavy with two great tunes in their usual style of thrashy garage punk charm. But the F.F.G. rule this 7" with their psycho-punk in the ESTRUSy/Texas vein. Everything that I have heard from this band rules. (JC)
(Dirtnap/PO Box 21249/Seattle, WA 98111)

SCIENTIFIC

s/t CD

Too light-handed and sing-songy to be reviewed in this magazine. Have they ever read *Hit List*? This ain't all fun and games, people, this is rock'n'roll. And the SCIENTIFIC CD is not. (X)
(Burnt Toast/PO Box 42188/Philadelphia, PA 19101)

SCUTTLE

"Testing The Strength To Surface" CD

An angry, discordant six tracks of emo/hardcore type stuff. Well-played and -produced and also driving,



this is a cut above the typical backpack/shoe-gazing rubbish that masquerades as emo. If your idea of emo goes back to RITES OF SPRING, or you like your whining with a lot of bollocks, then you're in for a treat with this one. (RK)
(Firefly/PO Box 30179/London E17 5FE/ENGLAND)

SELBY TIGERS

"Charm City" CD

Catchy and infectious the way the B-52's or DEVQ were. Now ditch the keyboards and add a guitar to thicken it up. I listened to this CD a couple of times to make sure I knew what I was hearing. Get this band some production that doesn't redline it and they're gonna be great. (X)
(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

SHITLIST



SELF-MADE MONSTERS

"Give Me My Rabies Shot" 7" EP

These guys are lowdown garagemeisters from North Carolina, and this 3-track EP is the sonic equivalent of a meth comedown. Their mid-tempo attack has that negative, primitive vibe that we all know and love going, and it might even provoke knife fights in a hillbilly bar, but there's an unfortunate dearth of melodies and hooks here. (JB)

(Braindrain/c/o SMM/PO Box 1122/China Grove, NC 28023)



SELLOUT POSERS

"Bad Mood Music" CD

Dark, creepy and aggressive, so maybe Alternative Tentacles should check these guys out. They sound like a

dirtier version of NO MEANS NO, although ot as technically proficient. I think that they would benefit greatly by a change of name, better packaging and a little bit of exposure. (JC)

(f4rthwave@aol.com)



SEWERGROOVES

"The Race Is Over" 7"

Two great new slabs of MC5-style distortion rock. Do I really need to say more to persuade readers of this magazine to listen

to this? I think not. (BAM)

(Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

SEX MACHINES

"Rock N' Roll Is Back For Blood" CD

Five goofs doing their best to offend every man, woman, and child in sight. Sixteen songs, all of 'em about evil, rock'n'roll, and sex, a familiar formula. It's poorly recorded and the vocals aren't that good, but if you're into over-the-top sex-crazed angst, slurp it up. (MC)

(www.thesexmachines.com)

SHAMROCKS

"Smoke Rings Around the Cadillac" CD

A fine Swedish beat group once known as the "BEATLES of Stockholm". This compilation CD contains lots of great Merseybeat



originals with haunting melodies and loud guitars (e.g., "We Gonna Make It", "See Me Coming", "Oxford Street 42", "Days", and "A Lonely Man"), and even

their covers have an appealing folky quality (such as "Things Will Turn Out Right Tomorrow"). Another winner from the 60's vaults. (JB)

(GBR Australia, no address listed)

SHOCK

"This Generation's On Vacation +2" 7" EP

Three absolutely essential pop-oriented punk tunes, recorded in '78, that are very much in the ADVERTS/ADDICTS vein. This thing sounds as great today as it did then, so don't miss out the second time around. (BAM)

(Impact/PO Box 15537/Long Beach, CA 90815)

SHUTDOWN

"Few and Far Between" CD

This one was way too predictable. Four preppie jock-looking guys in a band That's on Victory who write their logo in a college-y looking font. You guessed it, it's thick chugga-chugga guitars with lots of breakdowns. If anyone cares, "Few and Far Between" was produced by Roger Miret of AGNOSTIC FRONT. Way to name drop, fellows. (AD)

(Victory/PO Box 146546/Chicago, IL 60614)

SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL

"Red-Eyed and Tongue-Tied" CD

Pittsburgh steel mill shithheads who try to kill you with guitars. Metallic punk'n'roll similar to the HOOKERS. The rough and scuzzy vocals got to me a bit, but fans of this sound won't be disappointed. Too much metal for any one band. (MC)

(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)

SICK PLEASURE

"Destroy The Human Race"

SICK PLEASURE rule almost as much as bootlegs, and here we have both. Sucks to be the band being bootlegged, but it rules to be a music fan getting to have all this stuff on one slab! Their half of the SICK PLEASURE / CODE OF HONOR split 12", as well as their 3 songs from their s/t 7". Great old school skate punk, ala JFA, and, uhm, Σfuck

comparisons. If you see this, and you like punk, pick it up immediately.

(BAM)

(No Address)

SISSIES

"Look Back and Laugh" CD

A cutesy but earnest punk rock 3-piece from Indiana. Musically sparse and upbeat, with heartfelt (if not a little politically convoluted) lyrics. An O.K. record with a Kill Rock Stars kind of a vibe to it. (JC)

(New Disorder/115 Bartlett Street/San Francisco, CA 94110)

SKITSLICKERS

12" picture disc

The SKITSLICKERS were one of the earliest Swedish hardcore bands, and helped spawn greats like ANTI CIMEX and MOB 47. This 12" sounds really good, unlike many reissues which sound like the original DAT or tape or whatever sat next to a furnace for years. It's great that Distortion decided to put this out again for people who were either too young to have known about them "back in the day" or don't want to spend tons of money on the original slab of vinyl. †(AD)

(Distortion/Box 129/SE-401 22 Gothenburg/SWEDEN)



SLACKERS

"Wasted Days" CD

The SLACKERS return with another sixteen cuts of dub, rocksteady and some of the most relaxed ska you're ever likely to hear. This is

the perfect soundtrack for anyone who "shot the sheriff" and wants to spliff up to celebrate. An impressive use of space and layered instrumentation make this one yet another winner. I don't even like this kind of shit, let alone smoke, but I'm keeping it. (RK)

(Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

SLOE

SLOE

"Inexact Replica" CD

This album grows on you. Seriously. It might even make you sing along to these tightly-written poppy punk cuts. The similarities

to KNAPSACK fade, partly because these guys write really great songs, sort of epic quality songs that aren't afraid to take risks. (CJ)

(Sessions/15 Janis Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)



SMALLTOWN

"Stuck" 7"

Mid-tempo Mod power rock. This is great, complete with catchy but not overly sugary

choruses. I definitely think you'd be better off if you owned this. (BAM)
(Kalle Larson/Klarabergsvagen 18/57241 Oskarshamn/SWEDEN)



SMOGTOWN

"Audiophile" 7" EP

Another fantastic single from SMOGTOWN, and their only recording from 2000. You know they rock, here on three great tunes,

including an instrumental. If you haven't checked them out, stop fucking around and buy this. (MC)
(Hostage/PO Box 7756/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

SMOKE BLOW

"The Story Of Uncle Goddamn" 7"

Rough and seemingly distorted vocals laid over bad boy attitude SUPERSUCKERS-style rock, featuring hooky choruses complete with "whoao-ooh's". This does it for me, so get with it! (BAM)

(Radio Blast/PO Box 160308/40566 Dusseldorf/GERMANY)

SMUT PEDDLERS

"Bi-Polar Girl" 7"

Very belligerent '77-style punk rock. Choruses of "Let's Get Fucked Up" added to a rockin' beat of handclaps are always a good thing. Hand numbered and limited to 750. (BAM)

(Hostage/PO Box 7736/Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

SOCIAL INFESTATION

"Lasciate Ogni Speranza" 10"

A great 10" from this Georgia band. They have an excellent lyrics covering both socio-political and in-scene topics (as in "Tickle Me Emo"), which they also bother to explain (something more bands should do).

Musically, SOCIAL INFESTATION remind me of PHOBIA. (AD)
(Goatlord/PO Box 14230/Atlanta, GA 30324)



SONNY FLAHARTY & THE MARK V

"Hey Conductor" CD

Dayton, Ohio's very own junior league PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS. The MARK V were basically a "frat

rock", organ-dominated outfit that originally showcased fairly tough toe-tappers such as "Do It". But I myself vastly prefer their punkier and/or moodier psych-pop numbers, e.g., "Make A Woman", "La La Song", and "Hey Conductor" (which was actually banned for promoting drug use!). (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

S.O.S.

"The Mob and the Limo Love Scam" CD

Here it is, the hybrid we've all been dreading. To me, S.O.S. sounds like an Eddie Vedder-Chris Cornell conversation in Guitar Center. You know, where all you can hear in the background is guitarists trying different guitar sounds and effects. I'm damn glad I never worked at one, and this disc doesn't work either. (X)

(3:16 Productions/119-33 6th Avenue #1/College Point, NY 11356)

SOUL ASYLUM

"Black Gold: The Best of..." CD

For years, friends were always tellin' me I had to see SOUL ASYLUM live. By the time I did, PEARL JAM was opening and it was clear to me who was bound for success. SOUL ASYLUM wrote great songs, but I never felt they pulled them off convincingly, and hailing from Minneapolis they always had that Midwest stigma which I was trying to escape. Enjoy. (X)
(Columbia)

SPARK LIGHTS THE FRICTION

"Cocaine Honeymoon" CD EP

A pretty good release which sounds like HOT WATER MUSIC (minus the rough vocals) with some pop melody thrown in. I wouldn't be surprised to see these folks on one of the bigger labels currently snatching up this type of group. Worth investigating. (MC)

(Hex/201 Maple Lane/N. Syracuse, NY 13212)

SPIDER BABIES

"Undressed To Kill" 12" EP

First of all, a great pornographic collage enclosing a r'n'r record is never a bad thing. From the opening riff of "I Don't Give A Fuck

REVIEWS

About You", you know you're about to get your ass kicked. This could be a long lost early GG ALLIN & THE JABBERS record, all the way down to the attitude and the lyrics.

Snotty as hell. (BAM)

(Black Lung/PO Box 976/Morgantown, WV 26507)

SPITS/BRIEFS

split 7"

Two Seattle bands duke it out with each other. The SPITS are a rockin' synth-punk group who limit the art damage so typical of that subgenre, especially on "Pissed-Off Baby". The BRIEFS favor more straight-up New Wavey punk with intentionally goofy vocals, and their anti-BOB SEEGER track ("Silver Bullet") is hilarious. (JB)
(Dirtnap/PO Box 21249/Seattle, WA 98111)

STICKLERS

"For Entertainment Purposes Only" CD

Classic late 70's-style garage punk that lies somewhere between the ANGRY SAMOANS and the RIPOFFS. That means it's got lots of clever, satirical lyrics, some METAL MIKE-type yelps, raw guitars, and a nice primitive beat. The STICKLERS may be the best punk band to ever come out of sunny Hawai'i, so you should snap this up. (JB)
(Sticklers/PO Box 235789/Honolulu, HI 96823)

SQUIGGY

"Songs about Hate, Anger, and the American Way" CD

The Headache label has always been a mark of guaranteed quality, and once again it doesn't disappoint. SQUIGGY bash out eighteen uptempo streetpunk tracks with chunky guitars and gruff vocals. Although some are almost thrash speed, most feature memorable choruses that you won't soon forget (e.g., on "Hang the Lawyers"). (JB)
(Headache/PO Box 204/Midland Park, NJ 07432)

L.E.S. STITCHES

"Lower East Side" CD

I've got a bit of history with these East Coast STITCHES and it's all good. I know what they're about and where they're coming from, and I honestly think this disc sums them up best even though they're one guitarist lighter

SHITLIST

this time around. I still think "Booty" is the best frontman in NYC. Cheers, brothers! (X) (Artemis/130 5th Avenue/New York, NY 10011)

IGGY & THE STOOGES

"Michigan Palace 10/6/73" CD

I'm sorry to say that this release from the world-reknowned Bomp label is subpar even for a bootleg. You've gotta be one hell of a STOOGES fan to want it to listen to it. As long as he's still alive, IGGY's stock will continue to drop. Someone get him Ratboy's number, FAST! (X) (Bomp/PO Box 7112/ Burbank, CA 91510)



STRAP-ONS

"The Pimps R.I.P." 7" EP

Snotty old-school punk rock with a garagey sound and humorous scatological lyrics, as the song titles indicate ("Wetty Beddy", "Fist Fuckers", etc.). The problem here is that the production is thin and the tunes are generally lacking, so it's hard to distinguish these Virginians from any number of other garage punk outfits. (JB) (Rapid Pulse/PO Box 5075/Milford, CT 06460)

STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS

"Waiting for the Death of My Generation" CD

What else can I say about the CHEETAHS, other than that they rock and then they rock some more, right? On this disc we get to hear Frank Myer spread out and apply the best ingredients of bands such as the BACKYARD BABIES and WILDHEARTS. Expect some horns and the keyboard line from ALICE COOPER's "Clones". (X) (Triple X/ www.triple-x.com)

STRYCHNINE

"Born Too Loose" CD

STRYCHNINE sound like they're from an older era with their gritty hardcore punk style, something that is rare these days. At times they remind me of BATTALLION OF SAINTS, and at other times there's more of a rock'n'roll style to the music that updates it a bit. A contemporary comparison would be Pittsburgh's SUBMACHINE. (AD)

(Industrial Strength/2824 Regatta Blvd/Richmond, CA 94804)

SUNSHINE

"Velvet Suicide" CD

Artsy like P.I.L., gloomy like KOMMUNITY F.K., and peripheral like PERRY FARRELL without his echobox. Wait, I spoke too soon. Someone found the delay on track 6. I'm also getting shades of BAUHAUS, without the spooky thoughts that so often accompany them. †(X) (Big Wheel Recreation/325 Hunington Avenue #24/Boston, MA 02115)



SUPERSTAR ROOKIE

"The Problem With Words" CD

This lies somewhere between GUIDED BY VOICES and a punk

MORRISSEY [Funny, Brett — haven't I seen "Louder Than Bombs" on your famed "Records I'm Currently Rocking To" pile? - Dave], both of whom I think suck holy shit. Yet this record is absolutely amazing, being both very pop and very rock. The great vocals almost leave you wondering if it's a girl singing (it's not), and emo dorks, zit-faced pop fans, and rock kids will all be dancin' in unison. (BAM) (Diaphragm/2480 Indianola Avenue/Columbus, OH 43202)



SYSTEM AND STATION

"Common Or Relative" 7"

Intricate but not overbearingly complex indie rock. It reminds me a bit of a more subdued SAMIAM musically, while

vocally their singer sounds just a bit like Perry Ferrell used to on the mellower JAMES ADDICTION songs. (JC) (www.crustaceanrecords.com)

TARAKANII [COCKROACHES]

"No Boarding" CD

Hook-filled Russian poppy punk with a big guitar "rock" sound, much of which sounds pretty good to these ears. If you like groups like the later DIE TOTENHOSEN and "Bark Like a Dog"-era SCREECHING WEASEL, you'll enjoy lots of the cuts on this CD. It's hard to grasp the lyrical themes and identify specific songs (other than the covers), since I can't understand Russian, but tracks #1, 2, 8, 11, 12, and 14 are especially good originals. (JB)

(undiscernable Moscow address)

TEEN COOL

"Adolessons" CD EP

I was happy to get this for review, since I really liked their releases on Mortville. This time, Pelado Records delivers the goods. TEEN COOL play great punk rock with that trademark Texas flavor found in bands like the MOTARDS and the REDS. Six beer-soaked songs that leave me anticipating an entire LP. (MC) (Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)



TEXAS TERRI & THE STIFF ONES

"Eat Shit + 1" CD

If you like trashy punk bands fronted by lewd, nude, and tattooed rocker babes, as I do, you can't go wrong with TEXAS TERRI and the lads. On this CD the female IGGY belts out thirteen mid-paced rauch rock numbers, several of which are surprisingly catchy (such as "Holy Ghost", "Oh Yeah", "Women Should be Wilder", and "King & I"). Also includes fine DICTATORS and DICKS covers. (JB) (Junk/7071 Warner Avenue F, PMB 736/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)



THEE ANTONIO THREE

"Theme From Love Lesson #9" 7"EP

Japanese garage punk always floors me, and this is no exception. †THEE ANTONIO THREE serve up

four winners on this chunk of vinyl, and sound similar to GASOLINE. All the songs rock in that trademark Japanese fashion, so hunt this fucker down! (MC) (Yakisakana/51 Rue Pierre Renaudel/76 100 Rouen/France)

THEE MACHINE GUN ELEPHANT

"Gear Blues" CD

The most unequivocally explosive piece of straight-up rock and roll I've heard in a few years! It's from Japan, with a vocalist who gleefully rolls his R's and L's like Johnny Rotten and sings as if he's storming the Imperial Fortress, a guitarist drunk on East Bay Ray's guitar hook on "Holiday in Cambodia," and songs that are neither melody- nor jam-shy (in the "Kick Out the ..."

sense). Who cares if the riffs are all recombined from the ol' rock and roll trunk packin' trunk, since they're played with such intense commitment and overflowing, overdriven, ever-loving juice they make the Crypt clique sound like so many garage-rock TOTOS. (Phil Overeem)
(Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



THIRD BARDO
"I'm Five Years Ahead of My Time" 10" EP
A reissue of the best tracks recorded by these 60's psych-punks from NY, including the awesome title song (introduced to modern punks by Sweden's great NOMADS). The THIRD BARDO original is even better, though, and "Lose Your Mind" is equally killer fuzzed-out psych with semi-punk vocals. "Rainbow Life" is a fine example of psychedelia, and "I Can Understand Your Problem" is a haunting, moody number, but "Dawn of Tomorrow" is ruined by horns. (JB)
(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)



THUG MURDER
"The 13th Round" CD
Teeny-bopper, "Hello-Kitty" Oi Oi super CLASH/RANCID English-inspired punk rock music from this all-female Japanese trio. This will be a hit with the 14-year old kids and kitties, but I need something a bit more meaty and substantial before I can get my rocks off. Not bad musically, but as far as something new and exciting, I think not. (JAW)
(Flat-TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

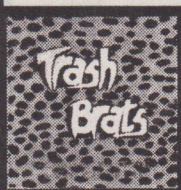


TOILET BOYS/AMERICAN HEARTBREAK
split 7"
Two bands that are very highly regarded around these parts. The TOILET BOYS rip through "Space Truckin'" by DEEP PURPLE (!) and follow it up with the aptly titled "Slow Dancin'". Hook monsters AMERICAN HEARTBREAK belt out a great original ("Angeline") and cover "Heartbreaker" by STONES, so everybody wins. †If you're in need of a double dose of ROCK, look no further. (MC)

(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)

TONGUE
"Faulty Parts" CD
Don't let the photos in *Flipside* fool you, this band is more than just an attractive lead singer. Musically, they are quirky and just plain weird, but not in a bad way. If ALICE DONUT became a hardcore band, they would probably sound something like TONGUE, though at times I also hear a MELT BANANA or X influence. (AD)
(Cannibal City/PO Box 5551/Pasadena, CA 91117)

TOXIC NARCOTIC
"89-99" LP
Hardcore punk in the POISON IDEA vein that also kind of reminds me of AGNOSTIC FRONT. I don't know enough about this band to know whether this is a brand new album of all new material or, as the title implies, a sampling of everything they've done over the last decade. Angry lyrics cover topics like drinking and fighting and go with song titles like "Fuck You", "People Suck", and "Junkie Bastard". Not for the pop-punk crowd. †(AD)
(Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 335/Newton Centre, MA 02459)



TRASH BRATS
"Songs in the Key of F.U." CD
A really fab collection of rockin' pop-punk with pronounced glam influences, spanning the BRATS' entire 13-year career. These cross-dressing longhairs have been churning out great songs since 1987, before some of today's wannabe pretty-boy punks were even out of their bibs. And they did so in rustbelt Detroit rather than in trendy places like NYC and SF, which makes them veritable paragons of cool. Listen and learn, all you mascara-wearing poseurs, and help make these pioneers the r'n'r heroes they deserve to be. (JB)
(Whoaman/c/o Trash Brats/PO Box 05387/Detroit, MI 48205)

TRASH BRATS
"American Disaster" CD
The latest dose of glammy punk from the TRASH BRATS. Like AMERICAN HEARTBREAK, these Detroit veterans have the ability to please pop, rock, glam, and punk fans. Sometimes the tunes venture off a

REVIEWS

bit, but these guys are great at their most rockin' moments. The standout tracks are "Must Be The Cocaine" and "Rocket To Heaven", both of which were singles. (MC)
(Storm/PO Box 151/Royal Oak, MI 48068)

THE TREND
"Bgtman Live At Budokan" LP
A fantastic re-issue of this old punk rock gem. The TREND were basically a bunch of high school kids in the early 80's who recorded some great snot-nosed punk tunes. You might have heard them on "Killed By Death" #10, but even so you should definitely pick this up if you can. An obscure selling point for me was that Bobcat Goldthwaite was in an early line-up of the band. (JC)
(Hate/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Roma/ITALY)



TURBO A.C.'S
"Fuel For Life" CD
Solid punk rock'n'roll in the SUPERSUCKERS vein. †The songs all have that guitar bite that we know and love, and there's even some pretty cool surf guitar thrown in to mix it up a little. I could go for a bit more attitude, but you could do much worse than this. (MC)
(www.NitroRecords.com)

TURBONEGRO
"Darkness Forever" CD
This one's for all you TURBONEGRO fans out there--20 live tracks to let the legend live on, recorded between 5/10/98 and their last show ever on 12/18/88. There's not much left to say that I haven't already said, except R.I.P. (X)
(Get Hip/Columbus and Preble Aves/Pittsburgh, PA 15233)



TURNEDOWN
s/t CD EP
Joe Clements (ex-FURY 66 vocalist) and crew offer us five songs somewhere in the zone between pop and hardcore. The tunes are good and have an almost New Wave feel to them. Fans of LIFETIME and SAMIAM should take note. (MC)

SHITLIST

(Sessions/15 Janis Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)

2c WORTH

"Give Up The Gun" double CD

Someone in this band must also run this record label. A double CD, with each disc showcasing a different line-up of this Las Vegas band. Its not bad--pretty basic, well-played stripped-down punk, somewhat akin to the UK SUBS, with some nice guitar soloing to boot. But I'm not sure it merits two discs worth. (RK)

(AVD/8370 W. Cheyenne, PMB 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)

UBANGI STOMP

s/t CD

Has anyone heard from the GOTOHELLS recently? Those of you out there waiting in the wings may wanna check out this UBANGI STOMP CD, since it's got all those rock'n'roll hand-clapping attributes you know and love. A less lo-fi DEVIL DOGS that'll grow on you like THUNDERS, bad guitar leads included. (X)

(Brain Drain/PO Box 39441/Greensboro, NC 27438)



U.K. SUBS

"The Revolution's Here" CD

The second classic ("Endangered Species") lineup is back with a new 7-track effort, and it rocks.

Unlike most "re-formed" old tossers you can think of, the SUBS new material continues to deliver. You really can't go wrong. (RK)
(Combat Rock/7 Rue Du Paquis/57950 Montigny-le-Metz/France)

ULTIMATICS

"Dolls and Skulls" CD

77 punk with a pop edge. It's very catchy a la the DIMESTORE HALOES, and many songs are anthemic due to their singalong choruses. I could do without "Rudy, A Message To You", but that's the only weak point. (MC)

(Ults Nation/2637 South 18th Street #2/Pittsburgh, PA 15210)

THE VEX/AGGRO

split 7" EP

A beneath-the-underground release with a pretty lo-fi sound. The VEX operate in uptempo Oi-influenced punk territory, and both "Punch With the Other" and "Friday Night" are pretty anthemic in an underproduced way. AGGRO are a hardcore thrash band with



occasional hints of metal, but if you like that sort of thing "Schools Out" is sufficiently intense. (JB)

(no label or address listed; sonic77@aol.com)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"o to 60 In 73 Bands" CD

77 bands deliver one-minute songs. While not having the big names of the Fat "30 Seconds" comp, this is a damn fine

collection. An unexpectedly high quality throughout, covering most of the punk/hardcore spectrum. Fans of the obscure and the international will be drooling over this, since Brazil, Austria, Latvia, Italy, Mexico, Lithuania, France, Israel and more are all represented here along with Canada and Yankland. (RK)

(no!No Records/1826 Virnankay/Ann Arbor, MI 48103)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"666" CD

Six cracking tracks apiece from three new (?) and truly excellent bands. SMACKIN ISAIHAH play balls-to-the-wall melodic hardcore that's somewhat akin to DILLINGER 4, with the rough edges smoothed out. MORONIQUE have a sweeter pop edge to their punkness, while MERRICK add a little more bottom end and power into the melodic hardcore proceedings. Record of the month! (RK)

(Tank/PO Box 40009/New Bedford, MA 02744)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"All Ages" CD

A bunch of hardcore bands--SUBTERFUGE, ENSIGN, VITAMIN X, FLAT EARTH SOCIETY, etc.--play covers, mostly by other HC groups (YOUTH OF TODAY, KILLING TIME, UNDERDOG, CROMAGS), but also with a few others (FUGAZI, ROLLING STONES, DESCENDENTS, BUDDY HOLLY) thrown in. If

that grabs you, grab this. (RK)

(DIY/15-59 149 Street/Queens, NY 11357)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Believe the Hype" CD

This a label sampler from Too Damn Hype Records that showcases nine bands. As with most comps, some groups stand out more.

The tracks by BAD LUCK 13 RIOT EXTRAVAGANZA were really heavy in an EYEHATEGOD kind of way, whereas DISCIPLINE sound like the BUSINESS and DEVIATE are metalcore. This also features songs by BREAKDOWN, SON OF SKAM, the RYKERS, COMPRESSION, ANOTHER NOTHING, and DARE TO DEFY. †(AD)
(Too Damn Hype/PO Box 15793/Philadelphia, PA 19103)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Bombed In Las Vegas" CD

It's good to see the area compilation making a comeback. It doesn't take brain surgeon to figure out that this is a collection of Las Vegas bands, and by the sounds of it they have a pretty vibrant scene going on. The music is mostly of the speedy gravelly punk variety, or the more melodic NOFX-inspired stuff. Check it out. (RK)

(AVD/8370 W. Cheyenne, Box 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Disintegrated: A CURE Tribute Compilation" CD

I think what we have here are frustrated alterna-metal groups who admit to liking the CURE. Despite not recognizing any of the bands involved, the songs are all done really well and the production is great. It's very heavy-handed, with a creepy MARILYN MANSON meets the Cookie Monster approach. (X)

(Too Damn Hype/PO Box 15793/Philadelphia, PA 19103)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Dr. Wu Compilation, vol. III" CD

This is definitely an L.A. comp, since it starts out with a number by BROKEN that smells curiously like TESLA or the BLACK CROWES. Here the highlights are the usual suspects from volume II, my favourite additions being the COYOTE SHIVERS and BUBBLE. I'm gonna tell you all one last time, the rock has moved back to L.A. (X)
(Dr. Wu/ 1629 Landa Street/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Gearfest" CD

Me, I skipped right to the BACKYARD BABIES and then the NOMADS' cover of the DAMNED's "Problem Child." It's a Gearhead compilation, and it's billed as "100% Live Scandinavian Rock n Roll." That it is, and for live club tracks it all sounds really great. The other featured acts include the HELLACOPTERS and ROBOTS. Gear up! (X) (Gearfest/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

HISTORY OF PORTLAND PUNK



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"History of Portland Punk, volume 1" CD

A very welcome collection of Trap label releases from the 1979-83 period, including both 7"ers and the live "10-29-79" compilation LP. It's great to hear the punked-out SADO-NATION EP (with tough but melodic classics like "Mom and Pop Democracy"), the WIPERS' punk rockin' debut EP, the NEOBOYS' New Wavey girlpop, the STIPHNOYDS' garage punk EP, NAPALM BEACH's unreleased Detroit-style rocker, and tracks by lesser-known outfits like the CLEAVERS again after so many years. Cool city, cool music scene, cool reissue. (JB) (www.zerorecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"I Used to Fuck People Like You in Prison" CD

This excellent compilation opens with a kick ass little number by the DAYBREAK BOYS that's guaranteed to toss your salad. The inmates here all fall somewhere between rock and punk, so it's no surprise to find AEROBITCH pumpin' iron in the yard. Go ahead and drop your soap if you don't mind being sold to the band with the most cigarettes. (X) (People Like You/1453-A 14th Street #324/Santa Monica, CA 90404)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Les Pauls and Breaking Glass" CD

A compilation highlighting the bands found in Coldfront's rock-oriented Sin City series. There's some really great stuff on here, such as the BELLRAYS, the CANDY SNATCHERS, ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN, the TOILET BOYS, the DEAD BOYS, the STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS, and AMERICAN HEARTBREAK. If you haven't checked out these bands, here's a fast and cheap way to

get acquainted. (MC)

(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Punk at Lascalla" LP

This record is weird. The GAGS stuff from the '79 session is really weak, but their stuff from the '80 session sounds like the RAMONES or ADICTS and the '81 material sounds quite MISFITS-y. Also appearing are MITTAGEISEN and T.V. VAMPIRE. †It's all from the 1979-81 era, but if you ignore the historic nature of this record and just pay attention to the music, it's really not very good. Maybe I just don't understand the significance of it all. (BAM) (Hate/Circ.ne Gianicolense 112/00152 Roma/ITALY)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"The Rebirthing: A Tribute to Samhain" double 7"

A SAMHAIN tribute featuring the JACKALOPES, GREEN GOBLY PROJECT, WORM SUICIDE,

MAZINGA, TANZENDE KADAVER, SEX SEX SEX, ADAM WEST, the NEKROMANTIKS, the UNNAMED, and the VLADIMIRS. If you're a SAMHAIN fan, snap up this limited edition record. (BAM) (Spasthmatic/PO Box 20913/Mesa, AZ 85277)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Ripperside Skates: Once And For All" CD

A compilation of various Riverside and other LA-area punk bands. Some of the bigger names include the VOODOO GLOW SKULLS, TOTAL CHAOS, LOS INFERNOS, the ASSORTED JELLYBEANS, and DYSENTERY. From pop-punk to melodic hardcore to snotty pogo punk and more. I don't think there is much unreleased stuff on here. (RK) (El Pocho Loco/3838 Jackson Street, Suite D/Riverside, CA 92503)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Rock n Roll War: A Compilation of International Rock Action" CD

How ya gonna go wrong here? This comp opens with the DICTATORS, and includes tracks from SYLVAIN SYLVAIN, SOUR JAZZ, NICKI SUDDEN, and TEXAS TERRI. I think that gives you a real good idea of what you're in for, and now we know who's gonna save rock'n'roll. (X) (Vicious Kitten/GPO Box 20/Canberra ACT

REVIEWS

2601/AUSTRALIA)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Sept Chansons for the Hot Rod Kids" 7" EP

Hard-hitting p-rock songs from seven French bands. Although I don't like the three faster ones as much,

all of the songs are pretty decent. The standouts are surely those by the JERRY SPIDER GANG, the SONIC ASSASSINS, and above all JERKY TURKEY, which is irresistibly catchy and powerful. (JB) (Lollipop/7 Impasse Monsegur/13016 Marseilles/France)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Stay Tuned For The Holidays: A Crank Sampler" CD

If you were ever wondering about any of these bands, this sampler is a good

place to hear from them. Most of them sound rather similar to each other, but at least they all rock. The standout out is the REGRETS' number, "India Ink", a little SHELLAC-esque song that almost doesn't fit with all the other samples here. Overall, a very enjoyable record. (CJ) (Crank/8571 Higuera Street/Los Angeles, CA. 90232)

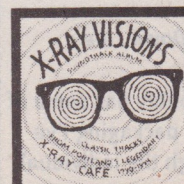


VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Surprise Package Volume 3" 7" EP

Flying Bomb Records' third Christmas single. This time around, the REAL PILLS, MHZ, and the DIRTBOMBS

serve up holiday treats. †Even though these are Christmas songs, all of the tunes are worthy of year-round spinning. "Secret Santa" by MHZ might be the most rocking Christmas tune ever. (MC) (Flying Bomb/PO Box 971038/Ypsilanti, MI 48197)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"X-Ray Visions" CD

This is the soundtrack to a film documenting the "legendary" X-Ray Cafe

SHITLIST

in Portland. It's all over the place musically, with lots of funk, folk-pop, and goofy rock. The one high point for me was the excellent live track by DEAD MOON, but it's not enough to save the whole collection. (MC) (Kwali-T/www.xraycafe.com)

VOICE OF A GENERATION

"Obligations To The Odd" CD

They've cornered the market on butt-rawk, so it must be time for Sweden to tackle streetpunk. Here are some by-the-numbers streetpunk ditties that'll probably get all the Hellcat enthusiasts going. It's OK and it definitely sounds good, but I've heard it a million times before. (MC) (Epitaph-Burning Heart/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

VOICE OF A GENERATION

"Obligations to the Odd" CD



Once again the Europeans demonstrate that they are nowadays superior purveyors of melodic "skunk" (skin + punk) music. Sweden's V.O.A.G. pound out excellent Oi-

type anthems with the requisite heavy guitar sound and singalong choruses, but also with some energy. Why can't us Yanks produce Oi of this caliber anymore? (JB) (Sidekicks/Östra Nobelgetan 9/70361 Örebro/SWEDEN)

VOODOO GLOW SKULLS

"The Potty Training Years" CD

The first VGS studio recordings, from 1991. Some of this originally came out on 7"s, some on a bootleg CD. It all sounds pretty good, and set the standard for their punk with horns. I suspect folks will already have an opinion about VGS by now: fans and completists will want this, and no one else will care. (RK) (El Pocho Loco/3838 Jackson Street, Suite D/Riverside, CA 92503)

WAIFLE

"And the Blood Will Come Down Like a Curtain" CD EP

This four-song mini CD probably has some of the most elaborate, "slick" packaging I've seen in a long time, although the individual

posed photographs of the band members are a bit cheesy. I was curious about this after hearing the band's "Breakfast Violence" 7", but the music unfortunately doesn't match the over-the-top packaging, as WAIFLE play sub-standard screamo that really drags. (AD) (Magic Bullet/2005 Monitor Drive/Stafford, VA 22554)

WARM JETS

"She Says/Diablo" 7"

WARM JETS

Tough- and mean-sounding garage punk, the kind of stuff that makes you feel like getting shit-faced, trying to pick up a girl and, if that fails, going on a

shooting spree. "She Says" is so riff-heavy and tuneless that it verges on stoner rock, but "Diablo" is an absolutely killer punk'n'roll blast with tuneage and a drop-out bridge. (JB)

(Acme/PO Box 441/Dracut, MA 01826)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

"Stand Fast Armageddon Justice Fighter!!!" CD

A veritable who's who list of Bay Area stalwarts, but WHAT HAPPENS NEXT definitely stand on their own merits. Over and over I keep reading about how this band is bringing back "bandana core" (whatever the hell that is), but to me their sound is a mix of early 80's bands like the ACCUSED mixed with a healthy dose of some Mystic offerings from the Slimey Valley era. If ever there was a band that should have been on a Thrasher Magazine skaterock compilation, this is it. (AD)

(Sound Pollution/PO Box 17742/Covington, KY 41017)



WILDEBEESTS

"Rudolph's Ruin" 7"

Norton always offers up a special Christmas record, and here's their latest installment. The

WILDEBEESTS come

through with some good 60's garage-fueled Christmas cheer (better late than never). I can't see this one pleasing me all through the year, but it's a good listen. (MC) (Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)



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A black and white photograph of a taxi cab from the back. The rear window has several stickers, including one that says "TAXI" and another that says "CITY OF NEW YORK". The license plate reads "CHS-68". The car is parked on a street with trees and buildings in the background.

three summers gone | time well spent

13. **DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION:** The undersigned hereby certifies that the information furnished in this report is true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, and that he or she is not aware of any material misstatements or omissions in this report.

three
[summers]
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San Francisco's **THREE SUMMERS GONE** bind collective personal experiences from their roots in South Carolina on this emotionally-charged debut title, featuring mixed-tempo melodic and textured arrangements. Band members also include members of SF's **BOX THE COMPASS** and Half Moon Bay's **UNDER A DYING SUN**. If you like melodic hardcore from the East Coast and the West, this is a must have.

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"Billy Idol meets Swingin' Utters." —Maximum Rockn'Roll. "A perfect band for imperfect times... these guys could make radio listenable again." —*HR List Magazine*; *New York's LIBERTINE* delivers a well-received full-length debut album with plenty of moody 77-styled glitter-punk rock tunes with a touch of early 80s new wave. If you like the *Psychadelic Furs*, the *Clash*, and *Social Distortion*, you'll have to check this album out.

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This collection of dynamic fast-tempo melodic punk is the debut album from legendary East Bay punk producer/engineer Andy Ernst (AFI, Nerve Agents, Screw 32, Rancid, etc.), Ian Miller (formerly of Skankin' Pickle), and Rob Ivey. Be sure to check out these sixteen East Bay tunes. Includes Ernst's "Tango Nada" (previously performed by Link 80), and a great cover of Screaming Waaal's "The Science of Nvltt."

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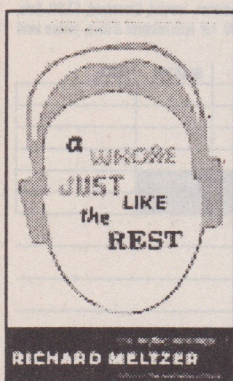
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BOOK

A Whore Like All the Rest
By Richard Meltzer
(New York: DeCapo, 2000)

"Well, for starters, I invented this shit. Rock writing. I was first. Well maybe not literal first, just one of the first two-three-four, probably the first to take the ball and actually run with it; certainly the sole early manjack you're still reading now. Before Lester Bangs was, I am (and he's dead). Which, heck, I dangle as neither credit nor debit — just my way of saying hi."

—Richard Meltzer



A Whore Just Like the Rest, the anthology of Richard Meltzer's rock writings, was supposed to be great. Meltzer is often hailed as the father of modern rock criticism — the font from whence all others sprang — and *Whore* is the defini-

tive (and huge) anthology of his rock-related work. Blah blah blah. All of these things may be true. I certainly wouldn't argue that Meltzer wasn't important or innovative — too many people have cited him as an inspiration for me to do so. He just sucks.

Slogging through the first 100 pages of *Whore* was nothing short of torture. After each "review" (picture action-finger-pseudo-quotation-marks as you read that), I desperately wanted to rip the book to shreds and burn each clump of pulp bit by god-awful bit. OK, maybe that's a tad dramatic. But by page 100 I was bored, frustrated, and feeling somewhat hostile. For the most part, I consider myself to be an intelligent and literate person. For crissake, I've read Derrida and Lacan and even understood some of it! But, for the life of me, I just don't get Meltzer. Burdened by the weight of all of his critical accolades, I began to wonder if perhaps I wasn't just too stupid to get it. I grappled with this intellectual crisis for a day or so and then, in a particularly bright moment, three very important points became clear to me:

- 1) I am not stupid;
- 2) Meltzer's analogies and references are so dated that it would be *impossible* for anyone born after 1955 to get them; and

3) Just because something is new, important, innovative, challenging, etc., doesn't mean that it's good.

At this point, I breathed a sigh of audible relief and warmed up a bit to Meltzer. And then I hit page 132.

My god, how could I have been so wrong? The man is brilliant! As I plodded through *Whore*, I eventually got to Meltzer's review of Creedence Clearwater Revival's 6th album "Pendulum." Up until page 132, I really hadn't learned a damn thing about music from Meltzer. His reviews were/are almost entirely inscrutable, completely non-linear, non-descriptive, non-informative, and, frankly, non sequitor. And then, there is this shining gem. Hopefully this won't ruin it for you, but I want to give you the briefest of snippets so that you can get it for yourselves:

"You you you kinda kinda kinda get get get the the the impression pression pression that that that Creedence Creedence Creedence Clearwater water water keeps keeps doing doing doing the the the same same same thing thing thing over over over and and and over over over again again again."

Meltzer's talent lay not in his insight or his ability to convey the power of music through text — or, if it does, I will simply have to go back to hating him — but rather, in his deployment of rhetorical structure. Additional examples of this gift are his review of Denny Lile (page 202) and his piece entitled "Maple Leaf Cowpoop Round-Up" (co-written with Nick Tosches, page 204).

Despite these moments of utter genius, ultimately, Meltzer wasn't able to sustain my interest. My enthusiasm waxed and waned depending on the subject matter. There were some particularly choice passages in the "My Inane Career" chapter, particularly "Elvis Exhumed!", which he writes from the point of view of Bob Christgau (you don't think he'll mind that I called him Bob, do you?). I found his taxonomy of punk so strange and inexplicable in the introduction to the "Punk" chapter that I felt my hackles start to rise once again. In fact, most of the "Punk" chapter was annoying — mostly because he rambles on and on and on about the purity of the early California scene and how it was so much better than what was going on in New York. Yeah, right. And the "Electrocute Your Cock" lyrics are just

dumb.

By about page 350, I realized that the thing I liked best about *Whore* were the selection introductions, in which Meltzer steps out of the zaniness and weirdness and just explains himself. It may just be that I like the intros because they are contextual, whereas his criticism is largely lacking in context. But is a little bit of scene-setting and explication really so much to ask? Especially if you *were* born after 1955? While Meltzer is frequently lauded for his honesty and directness, I find that his rock writing is neither of those things; much of his early writing, in particular, may be extemporaneous psychological spew — unrevised, unedited, straight from his brain to the page — but that doesn't make it honest. It makes it sudden. I found his deliberate pieces, the ones Christgau made him sweat over, the ones he sat on for a year or two before publishing, to be far more real, challenging, and true. Without recapitulating the book blow by blow, there are a lot of compelling reasons to read *A Whore Just Like the Rest*. About as many as there are not to. If you like Beat Generation literature, post-structuralism, or deconstruction, definitely pick up a copy if you get a chance. But for those more linear rock-hungry readers, I would strongly recommend you read elsewhere.

Reviewed by Alexandra Zorn

The One and Only: Peter Perrett — Homme Fatale
By Nina Antonia
(SAF Publishing Ltd, 1996)

The Only Ones weren't much to look at; an androgynous, emaciated singer with rotten teeth; a balding, cherubic lead guitarist; an average-joe bassist; and a drummer who was so old and uncool-looking that he could have passed for a former member of Spooky Tooth — even worse, he actually was a former member of Spooky Tooth. After releasing three modestly successful albums, CBS Records shuttled them off to conquer early-80's America. Less obvious than the Police, less threatening than the Clash, and less good than the Jam, the Only Ones ended up strung out and penniless in Sandy Koufax's Tropicana Motel. They had their moment of glory, however. "Another Girl, Another Planet", with its wall of guitars, crashing drums, and enervated vocals stands as the second

greatest New Wave song of all time, right behind "Starry Eyes" by the Records. Still, one might wonder whether the saga of the Only Ones and, more particularly, their leader, Peter Perrett, merits a 223-page book. *The One and Only* answers that query with a resounding "yes."

What sets *The One and Only* apart from 95% of the boring, sycophantic crap that passes for rock biography these days is Antonia's unsparing depiction of Perrett. Seldom does one encounter a legitimate anti-hero in an authorized biography. Perrett is that rarest of creatures, and it makes for enthralling reading. Antonia explains in great detail how Perrett financed the Only Ones in their early years by dealing drugs — not by selling dime bags of weed to his musician buddies, mind you, but by participating in an international cocaine smuggling ring. Perrett speaks matter-of-factly about sending his wife, Zena, to Brazil to bring back 10 kilos.

Antonia also chronicles Perrett's often bizarre relationships with women. A layabout Lothario, Perrett openly cheated on the long-suffering Zena from the beginning of their marriage, yet still expected her to bathe him and wash his hair. When Zena's teenage sister moved in with them, Perrett demanded that she bring him breakfast in bed. He was not an easy customer; "He'd have eight spoonfuls of sugar and the cream for the coffee had to be poured over a spoon so that it floats on the top. His toast had to be buttered into all four corners and if he has marmalade or honey, that also has to be spread right into the corners...If it was wrong, he'd go 'Zena, Zena!, she hasn't stirred the coffee.'" More troubling is Perrett's admission that he used to beat Zena on occasion.

Several chapters are devoted to Perrett's life after the dissolution of the Only Ones. In the early eighties, he retreated to his Victorian House in South London to work on his eagerly anticipated (by Nick Kent, anyway) solo album. Wracked by heroin addiction and a bad case of hepatitis, however, he succeeded in doing little other than drawing the unwanted attentions of the drug squad. By mid-decade, Perrett had sunk so low that his friend, Johnny Thunders, gave him a stern lecture on cleaning up his act. This would be funny except that Perrett and Zena's two young children were also living in the house at this time and undoubtedly suffered a fair amount of neglect. Indeed, as Antonia points out, the children remained on the Social Services' register of "at risk" children for years until Perrett and Zena finally

managed to get clean.

Antonia is to be commended for this book. While she clearly likes and admires Perrett, she never lets her feelings interfere with her quest to portray him accurately, trackmarks and all. Perrett too, deserves a great deal of credit. He was interviewed extensively for this book, and he obviously responded to the questions with a great deal of honesty. Some of the most damaging facts clearly came straight from his mouth. All of this honesty makes for fascinating, though not always easy, reading. *The One and Only* is proof that one can write an extraordinary book about a fairly ordinary band.

Reviewed by J. Hunter Bennett

Flowers in the Dustbin: The Rise of Rock and Roll, 1947-1977

By James Miller

(New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999)



The first bona fide documented rock 'n' roll lyric was scribbled enthusiastically on a crumpled-up paper bag: "Have you heard the news? There's good rockin' tonight." The author was an aspiring singer/songwriter

named Roy Brown, who presented this prehistoric gift backstage to jump legend Wynonie Harris. Harris declined, so Brown recorded it himself. Harris quickly changed his mind when Brown's original version tore the shit out of the South.

American music was in an interesting phase at that time. Teenagers were poised to separate themselves from general music consumers and become a formidable purchasing power all by themselves. Their parents' stuffy-ass jazz records weren't cutting it anymore; they'd migrated to swing, then to boogie-woogie, then finally to jump. And with the expansion of music, tastes were developing into classifications, forcing *Billboard* magazine to monitor thousands of genres as they surfaced. Pundits were paying lip service to what they called "race records," nothing any respectable white-owned establishment would dare display

on their shelves lest their Puritan lily-white daughters, overwhelmed with carnal, savage lust at the sight of a black man's pursed lips around a sludge-tootin' sax, climax on lo-fi command and thence follow a brainwashed civilization into smack-shot depravity.

In other words, rock 'n' roll was aching to be born. And most historians pinpoint its birthdate to December 28, 1947, when Wynonie Harris entered a recording studio in Cincinnati, Ohio, to commit "Good Rockin' Tonight" to wax. He yanked the throttle and changed the rules, and his back-up band slid like a high-speed drunken pileup into the rhythm, a loosened bra strap, a panty-clutch on the dance floor. It didn't jump as much as it leapt, struck, and killed. The wimminfolk clutched their chests all through 1948 and slunk into spent, spasmodic heaps every time Mr. Harris cooed through the jukebox glass. Sex was back in music, and not merely a whitebread Dove-soap, three-thrust Frank Sinatra who'd marry your daughter with your blessing. These motherfuckers were coming through your window waving broken whiskey bottles in your wife's face. You didn't want 'em in the same zip code. Harris was the first affirmed rock 'n' roll star. But the medium as of then had no name and no crossover potential. He was deservedly bitter but bombastic about his jook joint supremacy, and dismissed the Comos thusly: "I'm a \$1,500 a week man...I'm no Broadway star. The crooners star on the Great White Way and get swamped with Coca-Cola drinkin' bobby-soxers and other jailbait. I star in Georgia, Texas, Alabama, Tennessee and Missouri and get those who have money to buy stronger stuff and my records to play while they drink it. I like to sing to women with meat on their bones and that long, green stuff in their pockets."

So begins James Miller's *Flowers in the Dustbin: The Rise of Rock and Roll, 1947-1977*, last winter's auspicious entry into the annals of music history. The title is swiped from a semi-familiar Sex Pistols lyric ("We're the flowers in the dustbin/We're the poison in your machine/We're the future/Your future" from "God Save the Queen"); however, it speaks not of working class England, but in favor of a stalwart medium that has burned to cinders many times only to bloom again with renewal. But is this rock and roll or a continuously sprouting weed to which everyone flocks? "What had once seemed exotic grew familiar," Miller writes of the late Sixties, when rock gave way to tired, borrowed preten-

tion and overweening analysis (such as the stake-driver you read today). "By the end of the Sixties, rock had turned into a multi-billion dollar global industry. And my passion had turned into a job." And eventually the rock and rollers of old grew old and turned into the very authoritarians they'd once set out so zealously to destroy. So Miller ends before this happens, capping his tome with the afternoon of August 16, 1977, when rock 'n' roll's first ill-begotten son, Elvis Presley, was found expired on the pot in his Graceland mansion. His dazed cultists made the final pilgrimage to etch their love in stone: "ELVIS DIDN'T DESERVE TO BE WHITE." And in a way, it was that generation's epitaph as well. After that they submerged for good, never to express such affection again. Elvis has since been replaced by Sid Vicious, Kurt Cobain, Tupac Shakur, and Dennis Danell, heroes of another time.

Dustbin exhumes these legends and presents them as connected episodes. Miller's prose is simple and straightforward, a welcome respite from the usual pseudo-academic horseshit that passes for rock journalism (COUGHCOUGHgreil-marcusCOUGHCOUGH). This book was written for those people who were asleep six pages into *Mystery Train* — essential reading for only the most erudite of rabid rock fans. Those folks who can equate Levon Helm with Proust and keep a straight face. Miller's rock history glides smoothly via miniature vignettes. He discloses where the bodies are buried and who's responsible, without all that long-winded proselytizing. The simple moral: Rock is fucked, long-fucked rock.

It was bound to happen. Once the capitalists smelled sensation, they swooped in for the kill. The more well-meaning opportunists got mowed down, like white Memphis disc jockey Dewey Phillips, now barely a footnote in history. A music purist, he introduced so-called "race" records to an expansive audience on WHBQ-AM. Captive listeners were dealt solid educations in the blues from 10:15 to 11 PM; the response was so overwhelming that local soda fountain jukeboxes had to be stocked with selections from Dewey's playlist or the dance floor was just pretty tile. He was a white disc jockey and most of his listeners, although they were concentrated in one particular area, were white teenagers with money to burn.

But who's the disc jockey who gets all the credit? Cleveland's own Alan fucking Freed, a cash-grubby charlatan, the Bizarro Dick Clark. While Dewey was schooling the

Memphis airwaves, Freed was terrorizing the status quo in Ohio with rock 'n' roll shows. His crowning moment came with the Moondog Coronation Ball on March 21, 1952. The roster was a crossover platter guaranteed to inspire bloodlust among the ducktailed savages. The show began at 8:30 PM sharp with 10,000 souls locked inside the Cleveland Arena, and some 6,000 deprived ticketholders on the outside, pounding in anger and frightening the shit out of an outmanned police force. The cops wisely retreated when the doors caved in and a swarm the size of a small town proceeded to gut the building. Freed dug it fiercely, using the media outrage it generated to martyr himself with the kids. He was a carnival barker in pressed suits, a shameless huckster who didn't believe in the concept of *Gone Too Far*. He trumped his fucking deck a thousand times and always emerged prosperous. Freed was the hottest jock in the hottest industry city on the goddamn planet and no priest, no cop, no stewed-up parent was going to stop him.

Dick Clark, of course, was the antithesis of Freed. The only reason he's alive today is that he was the bigger hypocrite, and hypocrites have innate survival skills. Clark was personable and eager; Freed was a prima-donna asshole. By 1957 the Ohioan's pull was immense, he'd erected a small empire on the basis of unwatchable films ("Go, Johnny, Go," "Shake, Rattle and Rock!"), and he'd even given the nascent music its name: rock 'n' roll, a phrase he'd cadged from archaic sexual slang.

The promise of stardom was so intoxicating that record companies were literally fashioning idols on the spot just to be associated with it (and to sanitize it for parental approval). Ricky Nelson had gone from simple teenaged adulation to rock 'n' roll credibility literally overnight, with no intensive training. Pretty-boy Christian waif Pat Boone gave bump-n-grind standards from Little Richard a crooner's milkshake sheen. "Blackboard Jungle" (1955) and its Bill Haley and the Comets theme song ("Rock Around the Clock"), with its divitlick interlude, propelled each other to topical discussions on juvenile crime.

The form's incendiary effect had already been lost by the time "American Bandstand" premiered at 3 PM on August 5, 1957. Dick Clark settled in as the nation's oldest teenager who, ironically, didn't give a wrought-iron fuck about rock 'n' roll (to be fair, Freed's indifference to it was just as astonishing). He was all shrewd business: no funny stuff on my show, clean acts only, or goodbye. His on-camera

dancers were not allowed to touch, chew gum, or wear anything provocative. When Edward R. Murrow sent a camera crew on a tour of Clark's house, the funtime deejay went into a dither because he couldn't have an audience tuning in to see that the goddamn host of "American Bandstand" DIDN'T OWN A SINGLE RECORD. A few quick phone calls prompted an emergency delivery of a thousand empty sleeves for Clark to display for the roving cameras. We know he has them now, because he peddles them on late-night television ("Remember the first time you kissed to this ballad by the Platters? While watching my show? While buying my sponsor's products? While making me independently wealthy while the artists who recorded them originally starved slowly and painfully, addicted to mind-rotting black-market painkillers? Send \$34.95 to...")

Both Clark and Freed were caught up in the payola scandal that marked the end of the 1950s. To his credit, Freed told the truth: You bet your ass I took the money. Who doesn't? Who hasn't? Some of those label guys are my best friends. Clark, on the other hand, was smarter. When the government comes to your house, grease crack and drop trousers. He was Ollie North, the persecuted little guy who didn't know what he was doing was wrong; it was astute entrepreneurial savvy. But that was the old Dick Clark; the new one would readily comply with any regulations congressional subcommittees saw fit to impose. In the end Clark prospered, but Freed's penniless, whiskey-addled carcass had to be torn from the floor with a spatula in 1965.

I don't know, but for me, this always seemed to be the point where the worm turned. Rock became safe — Dick Clark safely driving 10 mph in a School Zone. Everyone became a team player, including Elvis, whom Hill installs as the book's integral, recurring figure (you'd be better off with Peter Guralnick's astonishingly detailed two-book Elvis series; Presley stories have been truncated here for the sake of space). He's discharged from the Army and sets out to drench his mouth in syrup, appearing on television with Frank Sinatra and making several profitable movies. Marlon Brando's "The Wild One" was deader'n ducktails; even Presley in prison garb seemed campy, five centuries removed from Hard-Ass Rock 'n' Roll Criminal. Little Richard gave up the "wooo"ing and double-entendre backalley fingerbanging for a gospel career, and Jerry Lee Lewis was caught trying to marry right outta training

pants. In less than five years the Beatles would come, satisfying the Rock-as-Media-Hype obligation, then transform the simplicity of four chords and raw power into lush orchestration and ponderous themes. Nevertheless, they drove their contemporaries to the Xerox until the four-minute symphonic suite became the masturbatory synthesizer squawk of High Art Rock. Not even the discovery of Robert Johnson's primitive blues works of the '30s can stop the march towards pretention; Eric Clapton might cite the dead guitarist as an influence, but it's doubtful Johnson had anything to do with his odious virtuoso "Slowhand" tendencies.

So what to do? We've hit a roadblock (and I've hit a sudden block of sleep; it's fucking four o'clock in the morning and this goddamn microbrew went bad about an hour ago) musically, with a Caucasian-dominated art form, its original drive long since buried under an avalanche of orchestral theft, hophead delusions, and excess, leading to premature death. Miller finds the answer in roots-exploring forms. In spite of its obvious theatrical trappings, Glam was nothing more than primitive rock 'n' roll with a heavenly dash of funk-ass Motown (Mott the Hoople, Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars). Reggae invaded America on the heels of Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff, disciples of Fifties Rock who anointed their ominous celebrations with a lethargic, good-time beat played at blunt-quaffing island speed. Then we go BACK full circle with the release of "American Graffiti" (1973), which sparks a revival of cruising music. And then, of course, there was Bruce, mighty Bruce, hailed plainly by *Rolling Stone* critic Jon Landau as the future of rock 'n' roll. While he was musically gifted, his ensuing popularity was more a result of unrelenting media hype. Bruce Springsteen created himself, but Landau concocted the whole Springsteen mystique, going so far as to contradict the artist's working-man history in two biographies.

But the music that thrilled was music that repelled rock's original audience and resonated with their kids, who'd either been too young to identify with the Stones or the Beatles or had found them unsatisfying. England discovered it first. Hell, it was broadcast all over the country December 2, 1976, and if you'd missed it, you definitely heard about it the next day: a band called the Sex Pistols had called television personality Bill Grundy a "fucking rotter." LIVE. Whereas original rock winked and nodded, punk rock was shaved fish. It had broken

that final barrier. Johnny Rotten didn't merely hint at abortion in his lyrics, he fucking flat out sang it. In graphic detail. Then followed with the indignity of calling this fallid fetus a "fucking brat." A new voice, but the same message: FEED ME. It throbbed with anger and hungered for pussy. Guitars crunched and groaned again, tentative string against calloused, hamhanded fingers just wanting to emit the loudest noise possible. The drummer, the bassist, and the singer all had the same idea. No one won. Christ, it was beautiful. They didn't shake hands with presidents, they got pissed on free booze and called secretaries fucking bitches and cut patterns into their skin with shards of glass.

And from these fragments grew life, death, and separation, as rock branched out, stretching into the darkness, forever. Rock isn't dead, Miller surmises, the nucleus just rests quietly in its own waste and ashen largesse, waiting for its chance to bloom again, observing its own edict: It's better to burn out than...you know.

Reviewed by Cory Frye

Modern Twang: An Alternative Country Music Guide & Directory

David Goodman

(Dowling Press) ISBN: 1-891847-03-1;

List Price: \$22 (available through Amazon.com for \$17.60 plus shipping)



I make no claims to know anything about country music. Nor will I even pretend that I like it much, Patsy Cline, Hank Williams, and a few miscellaneous tunes

here and there being the glaring exceptions. Even so, I felt compelled to write about David Goodman's *Modern Twang: An Alternative Country Music Guide & Directory*, a book that would make any punk rocker green with envy at the sheer enormity — and success — of this DIY undertaking.

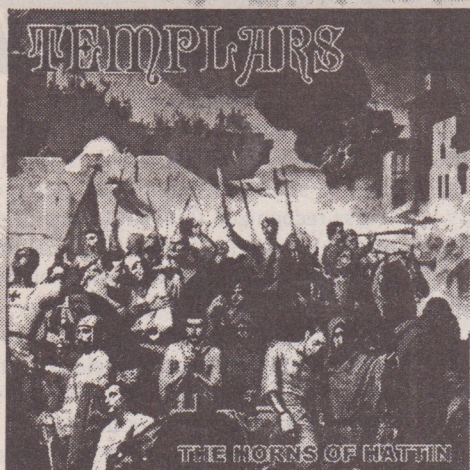
Modern Twang, weighing in at 440

pages, was originally self-published in a spiral-bound notebook with a xeroxed front cover, a version which is still available in some places for \$30). Dowling Press recognized this diamond in the rough for what it was — a crucial informational and organizational resource — and then packaged it up real pretty, slapped an ISBN on it, and got it distributed so that fans and musicians everywhere could benefit from Goodman's hard work. The contents include a thoughtful, although rather brief, historical overview of the "alt country" scene, and the guide then launches into an extended discography of acts large and small from around the world. The diversity of bands is overwhelming: cow-punk, rockabilly, roots, Americana, the list goes on. Even if you don't like country music per se, you'd be surprised at how many names you'll recognize in these pages: the Ass Ponys, Beck, Camper Van Beethoven, the Gibson Brothers, Kristin Hersh, the Replacements, etc.

In addition to the band listings, there's a selection of articles about the contemporary country scene, a list of venues, radio stations and shows, festivals, press outlets, venues, booking agents, publicists, record labels, websites, discussion lists, and newsgroups. The only thing I've ever seen like this might be *Book Your Own Fucking Life* <1>, and Goodman's book positively dwarfs it. I only have two, rather minor, complaints about this book. Firstly, the discography format is difficult to interpret, and provides no information at all about multiple pressings, cover art, or other items of note. So, for collectors, these discographies will be of limited utility. My other complaint is that there's no index; if you're new to a genre, it would be enormously useful to be able to look up "cow punk," for example, and see a list of bands that might be of interest to you. But that's just me being an anal cross-referencer.

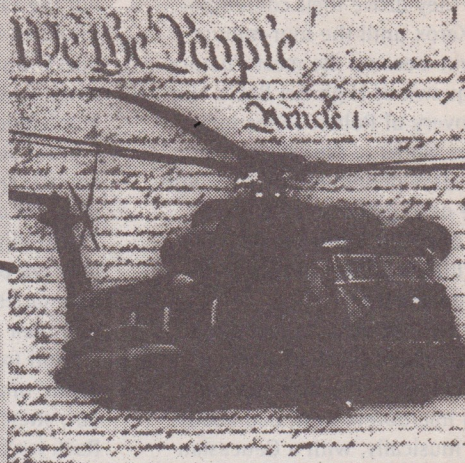
While I wouldn't necessarily recommend that you go out and buy this book, unless of course you're really a country fan, record collector, or struggling band, I would definitely say that you should go to your local bookstore and peruse a copy. *Modern Twang* is as much a testament to DIY as it is to country music. Maybe it'll even inspire some of you punks and rock-and-rollers out there to create a similar handbook for your favorite scene.

Reviewed by Alexandra Zorn



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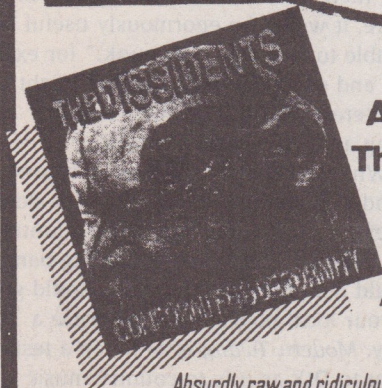
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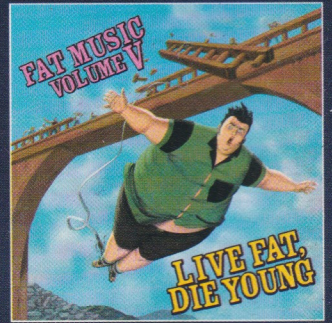


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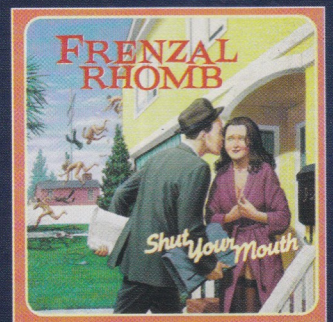
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